Puglia Villa Culinary Experience Gay Travel Italy

2020 October 17 to 24

A Delicious Gay Travel Italy Culinary Experience

Physical Challenge:

1 2 3 4 5

Savor the bounty of the rich traditions of Italy’s Adriatic coastal region of Puglia. By day explore mountain towns, seaside villages, Swabian castles and cave homes that pre-date the Renaissance.
Then each evening relax in our authentic 14th-century villa over a dinner featuring produce, meat and fish from the region, and olive oil and wine from the villa’s own fields. Click to read about the 2014 **Thanksgiving at the Villa**.

$3898

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- **Reside** for a week in the beautifully restored 14th century Villa Cappelli, perched next to the fabled Appian Way.
- **Visit** medieval towns and villages ranging from Adriatic coastal fishing ports to inland market towns.
- **Relax** by our private, clothing-optional pool in the villa’s courtyard and enjoy a complimentary cocktail hour every evening.
- **Sample** local delicacies prepared in the villa’s kitchen, using olive oil produced at the villa and exported to gourmet shops.
- **Dine freely** and enjoy wine or homemade liquors such as the local specialty *limoncello* with dinner. All meals and drinks during our week are included in the tour fee, except for one dinner on your own in the nearby village.
- **Taste** wine produced at the villa and sample the vintage of nearby vineyards.
- **Meet** neighbors who rarely see tourists and who enjoy mingling with the guests.
- The top floor of the villa has three rooms that share a huge living room and one bath, which could be a fun location for friends traveling together.
- A very authentic Italian experience without any “tourist” traps — you’ll see very few other foreign visitors as you immerse yourself in the slower pace of life in Puglia.

Active travelers may enjoy the [Puglia Villa Biking Experience](#), featuring the same delicious regional cuisine, with sightseeing to nearby towns and historical sites accomplished by bicycle.

**A Week at 14th-century Villa Cappelli**

This gay travel Italy culinary tour was designed to give guests a truly authentic taste of the Italian region of Puglia. Every meal will feature local specialties, whether sampled at an *agriturismo* farmhouse or cooked with guests’ help at the villa itself. And with each day bringing a tour of charming local villages and interaction with the locals, guests will truly immerse themselves in “La Dolce Vita.”

Stay in a villa whose history goes back to the 14th century and which has been restored to its ancient splendor by a gay American with deep family roots in the soil of Puglia and his partner. Walk along the ancient Appian Way.
Way and walk or bike along lightly traveled roads through countryside that reflects centuries of pilgrims, soldiers and other travelers, including Crusaders on their way to Jerusalem.

Puglia was isolated enough from Rome and Florence that the Renaissance barely affected life in the region, so many churches and homes pre-date the Renaissance, some over 1000 years old. From local fishing villages to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Castel del Monte to ancient Roman bridges and conical trulli structures in the fields, you’ll experience all that Puglia has to offer. Each day, enjoy the food and wine of the region, freshly prepared in the kitchen at Villa Cappelli, or at restaurants in Terlizzi and around the area.

**Map:**

**Day 1: Bon Giorno! Welcome to Puglia!**

All travelers should plan to arrive in Bari today.
Upon arrival at Bari airport or the Terlizzi or Molfetta train stations, a transfer will be provided to Villa Cappelli, located 20 minutes away on a quiet portion of the ancient Appian Way, a few kilometers inland from the Adriatic Sea.

After settling into our rooms, a light lunch will be available for those arriving early enough for lunch. The afternoon will be free to explore the grounds, then later to enjoy snacks and some local wines. We will enjoy our welcome dinner tonight at the villa, sampling the olive oil and other delicacies of the region.

**Day 2: Formaggio We Will Go**

This morning, we’ll take a trip up to the Murgia National Park where we will visit a local artisan cheesemaker and watch mozzarella being made before our very eyes — and sample some right then and there. We will pick up cheeses to enjoy for lunch and throughout the week.

From here, we’ll head over to nearby Ruvo di Puglia and the Jatta Museum, famous for its Grecian Urns. (Many of Ruvo’s Grecian Urns are on display in the Greco-Roman Galleries at the Metropolitan Museum in NYC and many other world-class museums).

Afterward, we will return to the villa for lunch. Anyone is welcome to join in the cooking of lunch or to simply lounge by the pool until lunch is ready.

The afternoon can be spent exploring some of the sites near the Villa. Puglia is famous for its trulli and there is a double trulli just down the road. These are stone houses made without mortar and used by farmers in past centuries when they were away from their homes and families in the villages. There is also an ancient church (dating from 1000 A.D.) nearby that is always a favorite with guests.

This evening we will travel to Terlizzi, the nearest town, for a delicious group dinner, enjoying some local dishes of the region.

**Day 3: Pasta — The Holy Grail**

Ok, pasta’s not really the Holy Grail (although some might disagree), but today we explore both. First, in the morning we’ll all gather to make fresh pasta in the villa’s kitchen. We will crack some eggs, knead some dough and roll out our specialties just like they’ve been doing it in Italy for hundreds of years. Then set the pasta out to dry for dinner then take off exploring.
We will head off to visit Castel del Monte, a UNESCO World Heritage Site that is featured on the back of the Italian version of the Euro penny. Built in the 13th century by the Swabian Emperor, Frederick II, Castel del Monte is perched atop a hill, overlooking all of Puglia and the Adriatic. The castle is featured in many myths and legends, including the Holy Grail.

After a tour of the castle, we will head back to the villa for a light lunch. Then after lunch, guests can enjoy some downtime at the villa. Later in the afternoon, an olive oil expert will visit the villa for a course in olive oil production and olive oil tasting. Tonight, we’ll all enjoy a delicious pasta dinner with the fresh pasta we made earlier in the day.

Day 4: A Meal to Remember

After breakfast, we’ll travel to the seaside town of Trani. This charming town features a beautiful port and a giant cathedral that sits right on the sea. It’s a beautiful gem of a city.

Next, we’ll travel back in time to 216 B.C. and the site of the Battle of Cannae, a major battle of the Second Punic War, near the town of Cannae. Here Hannibal decisively defeated a numerically superior army of the Roman Republic, and it is regarded as one of the greatest tactical feats in military history.

From Cannae, we will travel to the famous agriturismo Antichi Sapori and enjoy a truly special lunch in a remote restaurant whose chef has won wide recognition. We’ll explore the restaurant’s huge garden afterward to see just where all the fresh ingredients come from. It’s a meal you’ll never forget.

After a long lunch, we’ll head back to the villa to relax. Dinner tonight will be something light at the villa.

Day 5: Oh my, it’s Matera — and Pizza!

Today we drive through the mountainous Murgia region to Matera, another amazing UNESCO World Heritage Site. This area dates back centuries but is still occupied today by residents, shops, restaurants and even hotels that are built into the soft “tufa” rock.

We will walk the ancient winding streets that are so well preserved that they have been used in many movies, including Mel Gibson’s The Passion of the Christ and the recent Ben Hur. Then we will take our time touring, including a compact cave house museum, then have lunch in a local restaurant before heading back to the villa.
We will return to Villa Cappelli where tonight each of us gets to be a master pizza chef! Then gather in the cozy kitchen so that we can each roll our own crust (made from scratch). We will select toppings from the numerous bowls laid out on the table and put our creation on a long-handled tray to be cooked in the villa’s own ancient wood-burning pizza oven.

**Day 6: Alberobello, Polignano & a Meal with a View**

We'll head out this morning to Alberobello, a town famous for its trulli, which are stone buildings made without any mortar. If you've ever seen a Puglian guidebook, these structures are often featured on the cover.

After a quick tour of the town, we’ll head over to the seaside town of Polignano a Mare. We will walk the winding ancient streets and enjoy the views from this amazing city that literally juts out into the sea. We’ll lunch together while out and about today!

Dinner tonight will be a light dinner at the villa or a trip into town.

**Day 7: Ancient Staples of Fish & Wine**

We’ll wake up early today to head to the Adriatic port of Bisceglie and its busy fish market, picking out some of the freshest seafood you will ever find — right off the boats minutes before.

After choosing what we’d all like for dinner, we’ll stop by Giovinazzo, a cute fishing village with a magnificently restored medieval town center.

Once back at the villa, we will have a wine tasting and lunch. A sommelier will visit the villa for our lessons. We’ll sample local specialties and learn what to look for in a good wine. After we pick up a few delicious new tips, we’ll share the wine over light local treats.

Then after lunch, we’ll head to a nearby ceramics center with a kiln that dates back to before 1 A.D. We can watch as Italian artisans craft beautiful items by hand and pick up some amazing souvenirs.

Finally, we’ll all share in an amazing farewell fish dinner at the villa.
Day 8: Homeward Bound

Today we bid farewell to our friends and to Puglia. A morning group transfer will be offered to Bari Airport for flights back to Rome and beyond.

Please note that for some flight routings, an overnight stay in Rome will offer the widest choice of flights heading home.

When you take two tours back-to-back, you get a discount! Contact us for details if you’d like to visit Turkey plus Italy!

Come Early to see the Classics of Turkey

From Istanbul to the ancient city of Ephesus, and the beautiful Turquoise Coast to the mysterious landscape of the Anatolian heartland. On this gay travel Turkey tour, we’ll explore the best of this fascinating crossroads of civilization. Enjoy stunning city sites, archaeological wonders and a boat ride along the coast in a classic vessel on our gay tour of Turkey.

Price includes: Lodging for 7 nights in double occupancy at Villa Cappelli (some rooms share a bathroom); Limited single rooms upon request if available; All meals during the stay at the villa including local wine or soft drinks, except for one dinner in the nearby village on your own; Services of HE Travel Tour Director (subject to minimum participation); Transfer from Bari Airport or Terlizzi or Molfetta train stations on the first tour day, and back to Bari airport on departure day. Services of a knowledgeable HE Travel tour host (with a minimum number of participants); HE Travel provides complimentary Medical & Evacuation Insurance for every US Resident on our group tours who does not have other coverage.
Not included: Transportation to and from Bari, Italy; Personal items such as souvenirs, snacks, faxes, telephone calls and alcohol other than at included dinners; Admissions not described as included in the itinerary; Gratuities for guides and HE host.

Optional Tour Choices:

$1700 Single Supplement (for solo travelers who wish to enjoy a private bedroom and bathroom)
$600 Single Supplement (for solo travelers who wish to enjoy a private bedroom but are willing to share a bathroom)
$375 Upgrade to Courtyard Room at Villa (per person) - Sold Out
$375 Upgrade to Garden Room at Villa (per person)

“This was my third HE Travel experience, and they have all been wonderful vacations, and all very different. I had been considering the Puglia bike tour for over a year, but at my age (60) I was worried I would not be able to “keep up with the pack,” even though I know there is no pressure to do more biking than you can manage. So I was delighted to see the addition of the Puglia Culinary Tour where the focus is more on sites and food. I felt more like family than a paying guest. After breakfast, Paul would take us touring to a new lovely city or museum. We saw (and tasted) mozzarella being made on a farm and tasted extra-virgin olive oil one minute old after watching the olives being pressed.

Some days the main meal of the day was an exotic lunch in a beautiful town; one day we procured the freshest seafood and vegetables from an open-air market for a long lunch at the villa; two lovely dinners were at local eateries in Terlizzi. In the evenings at the villa I got quickly spoiled by Paul’s vodka martinis, alternately garnished with caperberries, or olives, or tiny onions, all house brined.” – M.B., Oakton, VA

“The Villa is just unique as a place and experience — the loggia and pool area are so comfortable and homey. The surroundings are gorgeous to behold. Paul and Steve are generous and engaging hosts with so much local knowledge, insight, and enthusiasm. Paul’s is related to or friends with everyone — again a unique connection to Puglia.” – Patrick Starr, Philadelphia, PA

“It was difficult leaving the villa and the new friends I made. Everyone made turning 50 the most memorable experience!”—D. Braget, Portland, OR

“I laughed more on this trip than I have in years. Paul Cappelli’s wit kept me in stitches all week. I felt a real bond with the guys on this trip and was sad to leave them all. This was my fifth [HE Travel] trip and I have enjoyed all previous guides, but Steven and Paul were the best by far...they were warm, welcoming and fun. They have a rare gift and made me feel like a part of their family for the week.” – D. Burch, Atlanta, GA
Kitchen

Large Event Room

Reception

Parlor 1
Princess Bath

Courtyard Bath

Appia Bath
What if I am traveling alone?

Most of our trips draw more single travelers than couples. When couples do join us, it's usually because they're looking forward to interacting with a gay group; if they wanted a holiday by themselves, they wouldn't have signed up to travel with us. Furthermore, the activities included with our trips serve as natural ice-breakers. Within a day, you'll be traveling with friends. You don't need to pay the single supplement if you're traveling alone. We'll be happy to match you with a roommate. Pay the single supplement only if you want a bedroom to yourself.

For selected trips, including cruises, we will charge half the single supplement if you request a roommate but we can't match you with someone.

How do I get to the Villa?

This tour starts and ends in Bari, Puglia, Italy.

**Airplane Travel:** Most flights to Bari are from Rome, so North American travelers can depart home the evening before our tour starts, arrive in Rome in the morning, then connect on a late morning or early afternoon flight to Bari. Please allow a minimum of two hours to connect in the often-chaotic Rome airport (three hours if possible). There are a few direct flights to Bari from Milan's domestic airport, Munich and other European hubs. If you take one of these flights, allow a long connection window since there are far fewer flight choices to get to Bari than there are from Rome.

**Rail Travel:** The Villa is a 6-8-hour train ride from Rome or Milan. If you take the train, the closest station is Terlizzi, a four-minute ride from the Villa. Take the express train to Barletta Centrale (Barletta C. Le) then transfer to the local commuter railway for the last leg to Terlizzi. Trains run every 40 minutes for most of the day, and schedules are at this website: www.ferrovienordbarese.it/home (click on the British flag in the upper right for English)

To check national rail schedules and Italy rail pass options, see www.raileurope.com or check the Italian Railway site www.trenitalia.com for trains from Rome, Milan or other Italian cities to Barletta.

For those returning to North America after our tour, you will need a morning flight from Bari to connect with most international flights. If you have time, you may prefer a leisurely late morning flight from Bari to Rome, a night or two in Rome, then your flight home.

Does this sound confusing? We're here to help! Our flight/rail specialists have been helping guests arrange travel to the Villa for years, and will be happy to assist you too! Please Contact Us if you’d like travel assistance for this tour.

What is the Activity Level of This Tour?

1 [ ] 2 [x] 3 [ ] 4 [ ] 5 [ ]

This trip offers daily sightseeing with a moderate amount of walking on uneven pavement and paths in cities, villages, the countryside, and historic sites. Someone who cannot walk long distances could enjoy most aspects of the tour but may want to stay near our vehicle instead of joining longer walks.
Several mountain bikes are available at Villa Cappelli for those who would like to do some informal riding. The lightly traveled roads near the villa are a mix of gravel and paved roads.

As a culinary tour, this tour will feature a bountiful array of fruits, vegetables, meat, fish and delicious olive oil, sauces, and seasonings. As with all of our tours, we will do our best to accommodate any dietary needs of our guests.

**Additional Questions**

For answers to your additional questions, please email info@hetravel.com or call 305-294-8174