



HEDONISTIC HIKING

Southern Italy - 9 Days

Basilicata: The land where time stood still

This tour explores the undiscovered region of Basilicata in the instep of the foot of Italy. Much of the region is completely untouched by the modern world and time seemingly stands still. We start in the pretty town of Maratea on the west coast before heading inland to the pristine Pollino National Park. Here we stay in the charming small town of Rotonda for three nights, surrounded by its magnificent scenery and fascinating history. The final stop of the tour is the unique Unesco World Heritage city of Matera which, in **2019**, was the European Capital of Culture. We stay in an Albergo diffuso, or "scattered hotel", with rooms carefully converted from the town's original cave dwellings, each with its own individual features and atmosphere. Our final walk explores the compelling history of this matchless city and the surrounding countryside.

What is included?

- **8 nights' accommodation** in three wonderful hotels
- **Two experienced and knowledgeable guides** who will look after your every need and bring this stunning area to life
- **All meals** including excellent wines
- **Gourmet picnic lunches** each day and snacks en route
- **Support vehicle**, enabling you to walk as much or as little as you please
- **Transport** in air-conditioned minibus to and from Naples
- **All museum entries/tastings** as per the itinerary
- Comprehensive **pre-trip information**

Tour Highlights

Sleep in a cave in the Unesco World Heritage city of Matera
Hike in the spectacular and untouched Pollino National Park
Discover spellbinding wonders of this ancient land

Accommodation

Locanda delle Donne Monache: 4-star hotel in former convent in old town of Maratea with a swimming pool

Il Borgo Ospitale: A "scattered hotel" spread across different buildings in Rotonda, in the heart of the Pollino National Park

Le Grotte della Cività: Sister hotel to the stunning Sextantio hotel where we stay on our Abruzzo tour, this hotel's rooms are converted from Matera's original cave dwellings

Itinerary



Day 1:

Meet at the Renaissance Hotel Naples at 09.30am. We head south, stopping in Campania at a **mozzarella farm** for a visit and tasting of genuine Mozzarella di Bufala DOP. After lunch we continue to **Maratea**, a pretty town which clings to a hillside overlooking the Tyrrhenian coast below a dramatic statue of Christ the Redeemer. We stay for three nights in a [delightful hotel](#) in the old town. Welcome drink before dinner in a local restaurant.

Day 2:

Today we hike from the vibrant mountain village of **Trecchina**, following an important pilgrim trail which climbs up to the **Madonna del Soccorso**. After a picnic lunch we head off across open country, following shepherds' trails which descend through remote pastures to join a pretty mule track clinging to the mountainside overlooking the coast. Enjoy wonderful coastal views as we approach Maratea with the imposing 21m high statue of Christ which overlooks the town. Dinner in a local restaurant this evening. **(12km/7.4 miles)**



Day 3:

Our hike this morning follows an old medieval trail which climbs up through lovely chestnut and oak woods and passes through remote grazing areas. Picnic at a low mountain pass with views to the coast. In the afternoon the trail follows an old mule track, descending to the coastal hamlet of **Aquafredda**. Dinner in a local restaurant. **(8km + 8km/4.9 +4.9 miles)**

Day 4:

Today we depart Maratea and drive along the coast into Calabria before heading inland to the village of Papisidero. Our hike today is in a very different landscape. We begin by walking through the village, crossing the river on a lovely stone bridge before joining an attractive trail above the river gorge. After a delicious lunch of local antipasti, we visit a Paleolithic cave first excavated in 1961. In the afternoon we continue our journey by road to arrive at our hotel in Rotonda, nestled in the heart of the Pollino National Park.

This is our base for the next three nights as we explore the delights of the Pollino. Each night we enjoy delicious Lucanian cuisine in local restaurants. **(10.5 km/6.5 miles)**



Day 5:



Today, after a 15 minute drive, we start our hike from a small hamlet and climb through beech forests on a woodland track, breaking out through the treeline to enjoy our picnic lunch. After lunch we climb a little further before descending through the Unesco listed landscape and continuing our descent on a ravine track, until we reach the hamlet where we finish our walk. **(15.5 km/9.6 miles)**

Day 6:

A 30 min drive takes us to the Colle di Impiso where we start our walk. This spectacular hike takes us to the gem of the Pollino National Park, the Piani del Pollino and the magical world of the Loricato Pine forests. As there is no van access at lunch today, your guides will hike the picnic in for you, before returning to Rotonda for our final dinner there. **(16.5km/10.2 miles)**



Day 7:



We leave our hotel this morning, stopping to view a remarkable collection of prehistoric remains in the local Rotonda museum. Time for a cappuccino before we continue by road to the Ionian coast where we visit the important ancient Greek site at Policoro. Leisurely lunch of local seafood before continuing to the Unesco World Heritage city of Matera. Time to settle into your cave in the Albergo Diffuso, Le Grotte della Civita. This is the sister hotel to the Sextantio where we stay on our Abruzzo tour. At dusk we join a local guide for a tour of the Sassi (cave-dwellings) of the old town before a few drinks and local specialities at a wine bar.

Day 8:

Today our walk starts from a point outside the city. We return on foot, passing rock churches and abandoned houses with lovely viewpoints, to our hotel where we have a light lunch. In the afternoon there is free time to enjoy the amazing sights and to take in some of the wonderful museums in town. Tonight, our final dinner is in one of the best restaurants in Matera. **(8km/4.9 miles)**



Day 9:

Return to Naples for 12.30 pm, with a drop-off at the airport, train station and Renaissance Hotel. For guests wishing to explore Puglia or cross the Adriatic to Croatia after the tour we can organise transfers to Bari for approximately €150.

Walking

Shortest day: 8km/4.9 miles

Longest day: 16.5km/10.2 miles

There are 6 days of walking on this trip. We walk on a selection of mule tracks, forest paths, rugged mountain trails and open pastures. There are some significant ascents and descents, some up to 700 metres in a day. Sturdy walking boots, with good ankle support, are essential. Walking poles are also recommended, especially on steeper sections. To see how we grade the walking we have a [simple comparison](#) of all our tours, taking into account ascents/descents, distances and terrain.

Useful links to our website:

[Naples](#) City Page

[Pollino National Park](#) Blog Post

[Matera](#) Blog Post

[Rotonda](#) Blog Post

[Buffalo Mozzarella](#) Blog Post

[Dining in Naples](#) Blog Post

[Aglianico Wine](#) Blog Post

[Paestum](#) Blog Post

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