

Touring holidays of Italy

Expressions



Amalfi Coast, Basilicata and Puglia fly-drive tour



Amalfi Coast, Basilicata and Puglia fly-drive tour

12 NIGHTS / 13 DAYS

Amalfi

Maratea

Savelletri



Your touring holiday starts by flying into Naples, where you collect a hire car and make the short journey southwards to Amalfi. Your first stop is at the five-star Hotel Santa Caterina, which can be found perched on a cliff-edge on the breath-taking Amalfi coast. An early 19th century building, interiors blend traditional and authentic features, with handmade floor tiles and antique furniture combined with comfortable furnishings. Best known for its dramatic coastal scenery, the Amalfi Coast is dotted with charming towns which are well worth visiting. After four nights in Amalfi, drive further southwards about two and a half hours into the Basilicata region. It is in the lovely coastal town of Maratea that you will find your second hotel, the Locanda delle Donne Monache. Basilicata is a historical region of outstanding natural beauty, with an unspoiled coastline of bays, coves and long sandy beaches. The interior is rugged and sparsely populated, allowing visitors to discover an authentic and ancient part of southern Italy. After spending four nights in Basilicata, your touring holiday will conclude in the region of Puglia at the five-star Il Melograno. The journey from Maratea to Savelletri takes you through wild and mountainous countryside as you travel from the west coast of Italy to the east coast. After spending four nights in Puglia, drive less than an hour north along the coast to Bari airport, where you return your hire car and fly back to London.

PRICES

From £2,890 per person in low season, **from £3,820 per person** in high season

Based on two people sharing a double or twin room.

Alternative hotel options can be offered in most locations as well as room upgrade supplements.

DATES

This holiday can be arranged throughout the year, however some hotels may close during the winter season.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Scheduled flight with British Airways London to Naples, returning from Bari to London
- Hire of a Group B car for the duration of the holiday
- Four nights' bed and breakfast at the Hotel Santa Caterina, Amalfi
- Four nights' bed and breakfast at the Locanda delle Donne Monache, Maratea
- Four nights' bed and breakfast at Il Melograno, near Monopoli
- Concierge service and Expressions Holidays regional helpful hints

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- Early check-in or late check-out at any hotels (although we can arrange this on request at additional cost)
- Any other services not mentioned above, such as transfers and meals except breakfast at hotels
- Personal holiday insurance. This is essential and cover should be in place from when you book the holiday.
- Local tourist tax, usually between Euros 1 and 3 per person per night, and payable locally to the hotel

TOUR CODE

ITFD01

Days one to four Arrive in Naples and drive to Amalfi

Upon your arrival in Naples, pick up your hire car and begin this touring holiday with a short drive to the Amalfi coast. Exchange the uproarious noise and lively activity of the anarchic Naples for the peaceful serenity of the colourful towns of the Amalfi Coast, often built high onto the rocky coastline.

Your hotel in the white seaside town of Amalfi, the Hotel Santa Caterina, is situated conveniently near to the centre of town. Enjoy this enviable location by taking a wander to explore all Amalfi has to offer, or merely spend your days poolside, soaking up the rays in fragrant and beautiful surroundings. At the centre of town lies the Piazza Duomo, so called because at the top of the 57 stone steps that dominate the piazza is the Duomo di Sant' Andrea Apostolo. The exterior of Amalfi's cathedral is in the Italian Byzantine style, but the interior is predominantly Baroque. Venture down into the crypt to see where the bones of Saint Andrew are kept, before wandering around the tranquil Chiostro del Paradiso and looking around the museum. Take in the magnificent views across Amalfi from the atrium before heading back down into the town.

Walk from Amalfi to nearby Ravello via the trail through the Valle delle Ferriere nature reserve. You will pass waterfalls, climb old stone steps, cross bridges, wander through forests, and observe serene abandoned buildings, before you reach the small picturesque village of Ravello. Alternatively, appreciate the nature within the town of Amalfi itself by walking along the river on the Valle dei Mulini Amalfi. For a taste of the Amalfi history, visit the Paper Museum, which houses the last paper mill used in the area, or walk around the Piazza dei Dogi, formerly known as the Piazza dei Ferrari due to the abundance of blacksmiths that used to line the square. Visit the Antichi Arsenali, the old shipyards, for a tour of Amalfi maritime history, and in the evening view the Amalfi Musical under the arched stone ceiling of one of the shipyards. Wander up between the towering white houses of the Vagliendola, or learn the history of the famous Amalfi lemons at the Museo dell' Agricoltura. Nearby Conca dei Marini, built on a promontory, is the site of the famous and beautiful Emerald Grotto, a half-submerged cave, accessible by boat, in which the waters glow green. Experience the Amalfi Coast's Saracen history in the Church of Santa Maria Maddalena in Atrani, or visit Cetara to try some of the local tuna and anchovies.



Trulli houses in Puglia

From Positano, the home of original and colourful boutique dresses, take a boat trip to the Isles of li Galli to see the tall towers that defended against the Saracens. Other excursion and sightseeing possibilities include the islands of Capri and Ischia, and the Roman towns of Pompeii and Herculaneum. Spend your evenings on one of the natural terraces back at the Hotel Santa Caterina, overlooking the deep blue waters.

Days five to eight Amalfi to Maratea

Leave the Santa Caterina after breakfast and drive southeast to the next stop on this touring holiday. Enter the Basilicata region of southern Italy and arrive in the small hilltop village of Maratea; a rural, traditional Italian village, it is protected from mass-tourism by its size and location. On the Costa di Maratea, this village is another excellent point from which to appreciate the Italian coast.

Your hotel, the Locanda delle Donne Monache, was once the home of the Visitandine nuns. The building's religious heritage can still be read on the shape and design of its exterior. With its central location and elevated position, guests can enjoy an excellent perspective of this traditional town with its winding streets and terracotta roofs. The real charm of Maratea comes with being acquainted with the flow of its little streets and lanes, its dilapidated archways, and hidden grottoes, or by dining in one of the small outdoor cafés that line the edges of the

Piazza Buraglia. Dotted along these winding streets are a total of 44 churches, all of which offer valuable insight into the town's religious history. The most striking of these churches, however, is the Chiesetta del Calvario, with its many attractive frescoes and depiction of the Virgin Mary. Avid explorers will uncover the crumbling houses and overgrown lanes that hark back to an older Maratea, thus far untouched by any form of modernisation.

Drive down closer to the shore to Maratea Porto to have dinner in a harbourside café or restaurant, before observing the art displayed on the harbour streets. Further along a coastline dotted with ruined defensive castles, you will find the smaller beaches of Fiumicello and Castrocucco, perfect for a relaxed afternoon's excursion on one of your three days in Maratea. Head to Santa Caterina to go scuba-diving with the local Centro Sub Maratea, or trek up the Mt. San Biagio in the Cliento National Park to reach the statue of the Redeemer. This statue, reaching 22m high, is reminiscent of the Redeemer on Mt. Corcavado in Rio de Janeiro, but the Maratea depiction is distinctly more joyful, youthful, and appears to be more dynamic in stance. Maratea hosts a festival in the month of May dedicated to San Biagio, while the summer months bring with them a wide range of events: from Jazz concerts and food tastings. You may, therefore, want to plan your trip to make the most of these unique, local traditions. Other possible day trips include excursions to the beautiful hilltop village of Rivello or to the remains of the Roman



Basilicata

town of Grumentum, with its still discernible amphitheatre and temples.

Days nine to twelve Maratea to Monopoli

Before leaving Basilicata and entering Puglia, stop off at Matera on your way across inland Southern Italy. Famous for being a cave-settlement with a scandalous past involving disease and poverty, Matera has now been reclaimed by its former residents and its cave-houses nurtured into habitability. Now a UNESCO World Heritage Site, it remains one of the most perfectly preserved troglodyte settlements in Europe.

Your third destination on this touring holiday, however, is Il Melograno, a charming hotel just outside the town of Monopoli, located in the heart of the country-side about five kilometres from the sea. Combining modernity with rustic simplicity, the property blends in perfectly with the picturesque surroundings of olive groves, fig trees and traditional farms. Once a traditional Italian masseria, this building has been lovingly restored to its former glory, with the addition of a luxurious spa hidden behind a citrus grove. The diverse and fragrant flora at this hotel cast a colourful light onto the pastel tones of each of the rooms. Ascend the local stone staircase to reach the quaint restaurant which overlooks the pool terrace through wide open arches. Guests can spend time relaxing at the hotel or on their seasonal beach club or explore the Puglian countryside where typical sights include mediaeval castles and small

villages of white-washed houses.

A 15 minute drive down the coast will bring you to the fishing village of Savelletri di Fasano. The main attraction of Savelletri is its harbour and promenade, on which you will find the rustic beach club, Lido Ottagono. This is the perfect point from which to enjoy the sea and explore the coves. We highly recommend taking the time to sit in one of the harbourside cafés and sample the Italian gelato. On a more sombre note, the village's Archeolido is worth a visit, comprised of a sprawling necropolis, a museum, and various archaeological sites around the town that are still being investigated.

A number of sports are available in Savelletri, such as horse-riding on the beach, golf at your hotel, or diving and sailing in the bays of Polignano. For a taste of the local produce and cuisine, seek out the many local cheese farms and olive oil mills, or go Soul Running through the Trulli Hills and try the Primitivo wines. The town of Selva di Fasano is only a fifteen minute drive away and offers a chance to get in touch with the Puglian landscape and tradition. Within the town the buildings are built in the Trulli architectural style, with pointed roofs. Its streets are lined with olive, carob, almond, and oak trees, as well as vines, arbutus, and mastic. It is also home to the largest wild animal zoological park in Europe.

Surrounded by a varied and beautiful landscape, seek out the natural caves that punctuate the mountainsides, especially the S.

Elia cave and its magnificent stalactites. From high up on the hillside you get a fantastic view across the Fasano Valley, and the small nearby villages. The hot springs of Torre Canne are very close by, as is the village of Alberobello, a somewhat fantastical image with its low white houses with circular pointed roofs, and narrow winding paved streets. In the evenings, return to your hotel to dine at the traditional restaurant.

Day thirteen Monopoli to London

On arrival in Bari, perhaps take the time to explore the grander, metropolitan side of Puglia. Tour the city streets, dis-covering the architectural gems, such as the cathedral and Pinacoteca. Perhaps even wander up to the old town to wander around the maze-like streets. Afterwards, return your hire car and embark on your return flight to the UK

DRIVING TIMES

Naples to Amalfi 1 hour 25 minutes

Amalfi to Maratea 2 hours 40 minutes

Maratea to Monopoli 3 hours 30 minutes

Monopoli to Bari 50 minutes

HOTELS

These are the outstanding hotels that are featured in this touring holiday of the Amalfi Coast, Basilicata and Puglia. Alternative hotels are available in some destinations - please contact us for full details.

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AMALFI

Hotel Santa Caterina 5 star

The Hotel Santa Caterina, a 'grand-style' 5 star hotel, stands surrounded by flower-filled terraces and gardens on the coast about a ten minute walk from the centre of Amalfi, in the direction of Positano. Perched on a cliff, the Santa Caterina was built in the early nineteenth century and was a favourite haunt of leading cultural and political figures at the time. As well as enjoying breath-taking views out to sea and of the Amalfi coast, the guests of the Hotel Santa Caterina have the benefits of the luxuriant vegetation of the palm trees, umbrella pines, lemon trees and bougainvilleae that adorn the terraces beneath the hotel. Pot plants, paintings, hand-made tiles and antique furniture give the public areas and the bedrooms a homely feel. You can dine under the white, vaulted ceiling of the restaurant or al fresco under the fragrant scents of the pergola of lemon. The menus are very good value (from about Euros 50 per person) and the cuisine is based on fresh, local produce with lots of fish and seafood (but please note that the restaurant at the Hotel Santa Caterina is closed in January and February). In the distance is the sparkling of the sea and the coastline of the Bay of Salerno. The Hotel Santa Caterina has its own man-made beach and swimming pool by the sea, reachable by lift from the hotel; here a wide variety of light meals and pizzas are served at lunchtime. Most bedrooms, which vary in size, have balcony or terrace and all have private bathrooms decorated with specially designed tiles. It is probably well worth upgrading to the deluxe room with front sea view to make the most of the dramatic location of the hotel. We recommend the Hotel Santa Caterina highly for a relaxing stay and a friendly, cosy atmosphere.

MARATEA

La Locanda delle Donne Monache 4 star

La Locanda delle Donne Monache is set in the heart of the delightful coastal town of Maratea and was once occupied by Visitandine nuns. The hotel, nestling in its private gardens with large terrace, is ideally placed for enjoying the coast and the beaches of Maratea, whilst also



Il Melograno

exploring the dramatic wealth of scenic and cultural treasures the Lucania region here has to offer. The atmosphere is one of understated elegance, and simplicity with a slight exotic touch. The rooms, each named after an aspect of the ancient monastery life, make the most of the abundant light, and their furnishings combine the classic with warmth; each room is decorated with Murano lamps, contemporary oils and traditional paintings. All rooms have long windows, balconies or terraces with private gardens. The hotel's restaurant, Il Sacello, offers local and traditional recipes served to the highest contemporary standards and guests can dine both indoors and under the portico overlooking the garden.

MONOPOLI

Il Melograno 5 star

Located around 4 kilometres inland from the town of Monopoli, Il Melograno is a pretty hotel in the heart of the countryside. Surrounded by olive groves and fig trees and a number of old masserias, or farms, the landscape is particularly beautiful. Undoubtedly one of the finest hotels in Puglia, Il Melograno is owned

by Camillo Guerra, who has restored the 16th Century structure impeccably and decorated it with his fine collection of art and antiques. All the luxuries one would expect of a 5 star hotel are here, yet none of the regional character or charm of the place has been compromised. The olive groves surrounding the Il Melograno hotel provide the extra virgin olive oil used in its excellent Mediterranean cuisine and the fruits of an ancient citrus grove in the gardens are used to make the fresh orange juice and jams which are offered at breakfast. These trees can be seen through the picture windows of the cool and spacious lounge areas, which provide welcome shade during the summer months. Given the hot climate in this corner of southern Italy, guests usually dine 'al fresco' and breakfast is taken by the pool. 'Il Melograno' means the pomegranate, and in the hotel grounds, one can wander amongst a profusion of greenery, including pomegranate trees, indian figs and almonds. The Il Melograno hotel features a luxurious spa with hammam and hydrochromotherapy, as well as an indoor pool, sauna and gym. The bedrooms are charmingly decorated in Moorish style and are situated in two wings of the hotel, nestling around a central piazzetta. They feature period furniture and oriental rugs cover the pale tiled floors. There is a private beach five miles from the hotel, towards the ancient town of Egnazia. Il Melograno's unique fish restaurant can be found here. A member of Relais & Chateaux, Il Melograno offers a serene and beautiful base from which to explore this region.



Locanda delle Donne Monache



Hotel Santa Caterina

MAP OF AMALFI COAST, BASILICATA AND PUGLIA TOUR

The map below illustrates the route outlined in this touring itinerary, with overnight stops and places of interest highlighted.



GENERAL INFORMATION

This tailor-made touring holiday is one of several suggested touring holidays we can offer you exactly as it is but also with any alterations you might want including extra nights in one or more places or adding in extra places. All our tours can be extended so that you can include a longer stay in one mountain or lake resort too, perhaps at the end of the itinerary. Do call to discuss the options with our travel consultants.

OUR TOURS

Our tailor-made touring holidays are suggested itineraries which can be adapted in numerous ways. They can be fly-drive (with flight and hire-car included), self-drive (with ferry or Eurotunnel included with your own car) or rail and hire-car.

FLEXIBLE ARRANGEMENTS

Our arrangements are very flexible in that you choose to travel on any day you want, subject to availability of your chosen transport and hotels. As mentioned above, additional nights can be added at any point.

OUR PRICES

The sample prices mentioned in this leaflet are generally a 'from' price based on the cheapest season of travel. However, train fares and hotel rates can change (up and down depending on offers), so we give you an accurate price for your holiday when we provide you with a quotation. Our sample prices should be used as an indication of how much a particular combination will cost and to show the differences on average between the hotel categories on offer.

PRICE INFORMATION IN MORE DETAIL

Prices from **£2,890 per person** in low season and **£3,820 per person** in high season based on two people sharing a double or twin room.

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BOOKING CONDITIONS

Our booking conditions apply to all holidays. A copy can be found on our website and a copy is also sent to you with a written quotation and when you make a booking.

FINANCIAL PROTECTION

Expressions Holidays offers full financial protection for all holidays you book with us. If your holiday includes a flight, the ATOL (3076) covers the costs of the holiday. If the holiday does not include a flight, it is the ABTOT bond that protects the cost of the holiday. We are also members of AITO (the Association of Independent Tour Operators).

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HOW TO BOOK

To make a booking, just phone us on

01392 441250

and we can take you through the details we need and start the booking process.