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TAILOR MADE RAIL

Discover Puglia

From £1,699 per person // 12 days



Travel by rail down through Italy to discover the sun-kissed region of Puglia with its white-washed villages, olive groves and Mediterranean vistas. Your journey takes you via Freiburg in the Black Forest to Parma, Bari and Alberobello.

The Essentials

- London to Italy via Freiburg and the Gotthard Route through central Switzerland.
- The historic city of Parma
- Regional capital Bari, stunning Alberobello and Baroque Lecce in Puglia
- A night in Milan en route back to the UK

What's included

- Standard class rail travel with seat reservations
- 11 nights' handpicked hotel accommodation with breakfast
- Private transfer from Alberobello to Lecce via Cisternino
- Comprehensive directions to your hotels
- Easy-to-follow travel documentation
- Despatch of tickets by email, post or collection

Tailor make your holiday

- Decide when you would like to travel
- Adapt the route to suit your plans
- Upgrade hotels and rail journeys
- Add extra nights, destinations and/or tours

- Suggested Itinerary -



Day 1 - London To Brussels

Take a Eurostar across to Brussels this morning and check in for an overnight stay at the Pullman Brussels Midi (or similar). Spend an afternoon wandering around the pretty centre of the Belgian capital with its magnificent guild houses, cobbled streets and chocolate shops.



Day 2 - Brussels To Freiburg

Head back to the station this morning and catch a German InterCity Express (ICE) train through to Frankfurt, Germany's financial hub. Here, change onto another fast train through the south west of Germany to Freiburg im Breisgau on the edge of the Black Forest. On arrival, it's a short distance to the Novotel am Konzerthaus (or similar) where you have an overnight stay. Why not head into the old town area of Freiburg for a late dinner?



Day 3 - Freiburg To Parma

Today you take the civilised mid-morning train that runs direct from Freiburg to Milan. This enters Switzerland after around 40 minutes at Basel, and proceed through the Alps via the Gotthard Base Tunnel, that opened in 2016. The scenery both before and after the tunnel is spectacular as you pass lakes Lucerne and Lugano along the way. Once you reach Milan, you have time for a coffee while you wait for your evening train to Parma, approximately 85 miles south of Milan and your home for the night. Check in at the NH Hotel Parma (or similar) for an overnight stay.



Day 4 - Parma To Bari

You have a morning to explore Parma, perhaps taking a visit to the 12th-century cathedral or the Teatro Regio Opera House in this delightful corner of Emilia-Romagna. At lunchtime, board a Eurostar Italia Frecciabianca which takes you comfortably along the east coast of Italy and into Bari, Puglia's capital, in time for dinner. Check into the iH Hotels Bari Oriente (or similar) for a 2-night stay.



Days 5 & 6 - Bari

Your first stop in Puglia is in its maritime capital, Bari. Known as a strategic port for onward travel to Greece or Montenegro, Bari also has a charming medieval Old Town, known locally as Bari Vecchia which sits atop a peninsula between two harbours. Not to be missed here is the Basilica of Saint Nicholas with its gilded ceiling, floor mosaics and the tomb of Saint Nicholas (otherwise known as Santa Claus). Elsewhere, the Romanesque cathedral and Swabian Castle (Castello Svevo) are also well worth a visit. The castle now hosts regular temporary exhibitions.



Day 6 - Bari To Alberobello

After breakfast this morning, catch a regional train through the countryside of Puglia, to Alberobello, the home of the famous Trulli houses. Depending on when you want to travel, part of this journey may also be taken by bus. On arrival, make your way to the Palazzo Scotto (or similar), where you'll be staying for tonight.



Day 7 - Alberobello To Lecce

Alberobello is best-known for its trulli housing, a fascinating feature of this part of Puglia. A construction with conical roof put together without mortar. Alberobello is designated a UNESCO world heritage site – as its collection of over 1,500 trulli in a townscape environment is unique. Some of the trulli are now used as shops, restaurants, and accommodation, although many are still lived in by locals. Spend a free morning here and then meet a private transfer driver back at your hotel for the drive to Lecce. Along the way, you'll have an hour's stop at the 'Pearl of Puglia', medieval Cisternino. On arrival in Lecce, check in at the Risorgimento Hotel (or similar) for 3 nights.



Days 9 & 10 - Lecce

Lecce is often known as the Florence of the South thanks to its impressive collection of Baroque architecture including a stunning cathedral with a five-floor belfry. You have two full days here to explore at your own pace. The town has two main focal points, the Piazza Sant'Oronzo and Piazza del Duomo. The Piazza Sant'Oronzo boasts an interesting mix of modern and historic architectural styles, including the town's Roman amphitheatre, half of which is still underground. Lecce is also a great base for exploring the Salento Peninsula – the stunning coastal towns of Gallipoli (pictured) and Otranto are 90 minutes away by local railway and in 2½ hours you can reach Leuca, right on the 'tip of the heel'.



Day 11 - Lecce To Milan

Today you take a comfortable and air-conditioned Eurostar Italia Frecciargento or Frecciabianca right up the spine of Italy, via the Apennine Mountains to Milan. Here, check in for an overnight stay at the Starhotels Anderson (or similar) conveniently located near the main station. Spend an evening exploring the centre of Milan and perhaps stop at one of the tempting restaurants for dinner. We can also add extra nights in Milan for you if you would like to extend your stay here.



Day 12 - Milan To London

It's a fairly early start today, so make sure you are up early for breakfast in your hotel before making your way to Milan Garibaldi station for a direct TGV service to Paris. There's a bar buffet car on the train where you can buy lunch or you might prefer to stock up on supplies in Milan before you leave. In Paris, cross over to the Gare du Nord and catch the Eurostar for a quick journey under the Channel to London.

Pricing

From £1,699 per person

Low season (November-March) from £1,699pp

High season (April-October) from £1,899pp

These prices are based on two people sharing a twin or double room. Single supplements will apply for sole occupancy. It is based on Standard Class rail travel and includes seat reservations as necessary. It is based on the best fares on the trains. If you travel during a peak period, particularly at short notice, then supplements may apply.