



# Puglia, Basilicata & Calabria

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## Best Places to Eat

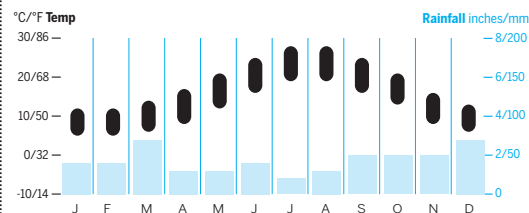
- » Cucina Casareccia (p116)
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## Why Go?

Southern Italy is the Mezzogiorno (the land of the midday sun), which sums up the Mediterranean climate and the languid pace of life. From the heel to the toe of Italy's boot, the landscape reflects the individuality of its people. Puglia is the sophisticate of the south, with charming seaside villages along its 800km of coastline, lush flat farmlands, thick forests and olive groves. Basilicata is a crush of mountains and rolling hills with a dazzling stretch of coastline. Calabria is Italy's wildest area, with fine beaches and a mountainous landscape with many peaks crowned by ruined castles. The south's violent history of successive invasions and economic hardship has forged a fiercely proud people and influenced its distinctive culture and cuisine. A hotter, edgier place than the urbane north of Italy, this is an area that still feels like it has secret places to explore, although you will need your own wheels (and some Italian) if you plan to seriously sidestep from the beaten track.

## When to Go

### Bari



**Apr-Jun** Spring wildflowers are blooming: the perfect time for hiking in the mountains.

**Jul & Aug** Summer is beach weather and party time, with festivals, concerts and events.

**Sep & Oct** No crowds, mild weather and wild mushrooms galore.



## Puglia, Basilicata & Calabria Highlights

- 1 Hike at the otherworldly *sassi* (former cave dwellings) of **Matera** (p127)
- 2 Dip into the Disney-style scenario of the gnome-size *trulli* dwellings in **Alberobello** (p108)
- 3 Hike in shady forests and swim in aqua blue seas in the **Promontorio del Gargano** (p102)
- 4 Stroll through the old centre of **Locorotondo** (p109), one of Puglia's prettiest towns
- 5 Wonder at ornate baroque facades in **Lecce** (p113)
- 6 Discover Calabria's picturesque seaside villages of **Tropea** (p146) and **Scilla** (p146)
- 7 Vanish into the vast hills of the **Parco Nazionale della Sila** (p140) or the **Parco Nazionale del Pollino** (p138)
- 8 Drive or trek into the wilds of the mysterious **Parco Nazionale dell'Aspromonte** (p142)