



Southern Italy



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Itineraries



10
DAYS

Southern Highlights

An easy introduction to some of southern Italy's must-see wonders, this 10-day overview delivers everything from cosmopolitan city culture to ancient ruins, breathtaking coastal scenery and World Heritage-listed architecture.

Pique your appetite with two heady days in **Naples**, an urban wild child bursting with glorious art, architecture, street life and flavours. Spend day three roaming time-warped **Pompeii** before continuing to **Positano**, the Amalfi Coast's pin-up town. Lap up two days here, hiring a boat for a spot of coastal cruising or hiking the breathtaking Sentiero degli Dei (Path of the Gods). On day six, continue east along the Amalfi Coast, stopping briefly in atmospheric **Amalfi** on your way to **Matera** in time for dinner, then spend the following day exploring the town's extraordinary, Unesco-lauded *sassi* (former cave dwellings). Swap *sassi* for *trulli* (conical-roofed abodes) in **Alberobello** the following day. Spend the night, then hit the road one last time to vibrant **Lecce**. Dubbed the 'Florence of the South', the town's quixotic baroque buildings make for an extravagant epilogue to your southern overview.



2
WEEKS

Sicily to Calabria

Ancient cultures and natural beauty collide in this two-week adventure. From Greek temples and Norman cathedrals to rugged mountains and coveted coastal resorts, expect a gripping journey through Italy's southern extremes.

Fly into **Palermo** and take two days to savour the city's cross-cultural food and architecture, detouring to **Monreale** to view Sicily's finest Norman cathedral. On day three, take a day trip west to the World Heritage ruins of **Segesta** before shooting east to eye-candy **Cefalù** on day four. Spend a night – just enough time to admire its commanding Arab-Norman cathedral and crystalline sea. Come day five, shoot through to VIP-favourite **Taormina**, a long-time haunt of poets, painters and hopeless romantics. The town was once Sicily's Byzantine capital and its sweeping ancient Greek theatre is the island's second largest. Allow two nights of elegant slumming and consider tackling nearby **Mt Etna** on one of your days.

Day seven sees you catching a ferry from Messina to **Reggio di Calabria** in time to see the *Bronzi di Riace* at the Museo Nazionale della Magna Grecia. The finest examples of ancient Greek sculpture in existence, the bronze sculptures are southern Italy's answer to Florence's *David*. Rest your head in tiny Gambarie, using the town as your base as you explore the wild beauty of the **Parco Nazionale dell'Aspromonte** over the next two days.

Come day 10, head back down to the Tyrrhenian coast. Lunch on fresh swordfish in castle-capped **Scilla**, continuing through to dazzling **Tropea**, Calabria's coastal darling. Spend a night recharging your weary bones, then continue north to the gritty yet erudite city of **Cosenza** on day 11. After taking in its impressively preserved medieval core on day 12, hit Camigliatello Silano for two nights, concluding your adventure with soul-lifting hikes through the alpine beauty of the **Parco Nazionale della Sila**.



3
WEEKS

Grand Southern Tour

Covering Campania, Basilicata, Calabria and Sicily, this three-week trip is rich in both blockbuster sights and off-the-beaten-track treasures.

Commence with a trio of days in **Naples**, day-tripping it to the formidable royal palace of **Caserta** or the ill-fated ancient towns of **Pompeii** or **Herculaneum**. Whichever you choose, treat yourself to two romantic days on **Capri**, making time for quiet hikes, the spectacular Grotta Azzurra and the mesmerising views from atop Monte Solaro. Sail across to **Sorrento** for a night then hit the fabled Amalfi Coast on day six, allowing two days in see-and-be-seen **Positano** and a further night in **Amalfi** or **Ravello**. Explore ancient Greek temples in **Paestum** on day nine before continuing to fellow World Heritage marvel **Matera** and its otherworldly abodes.

Come day 12, drop into ancient **Metaponto**. The hometown of number-crunching Pythagoras, it's also where you'll find the so-called Palatine Tables, a reputed pit stop for Crusade-bound knights. Close by is **Policoro**, its oldest cultural artefacts dating back some 9000 years. Its ancient booty appreciated, it's time to escape to the wilds of the **Parco Nazionale del Pollino**. With Terranova di Pollino as your base, spend three days hiking through invigorating woods and exploring the curious Albanian villages of San Paolo Albanese and San Costantino Albanese.

Slide down to Calabria's Tyrrhenian coastline on day 16, home to seaside show-off **Tropea**. Allow two nights of waterside *dolce vita* (sweet life) before catching a ferry from Villa San Giovanni to Sicily on day 18. Allow yourself another two days of coastal bliss in gorgeous **Taormina**, home to a world-class summertime arts festival. If you can pull yourself away on day 20, wrap things up with a couple of days exploring evocative ruins in **Syracuse**, described by Roman philosopher Cicero as the 'greatest Greek city and the most beautiful of them all'.



2 WEEKS Perfect Puglia

Puglia is one of Italy's most underrated regions. Start your revelation in dynamic **Bari**, exploring its ancient historic centre and huge Romanesque basilica. Strike out south, via **Polignano a Mare**, to the famous **Grotte di Castellana**, Italy's longest network of subterranean caves. From here, a two- to three-day drive south will take you through some of the finest Valle d'Itria towns, including **Alberobello**, with its hobbitlike *trulli* houses, wine-producing **Locorotondo**, beautiful baroque **Martina Franca** and chic, white-washed **Ostuni**. Next up is **Lecce**, dubbed 'Florence of the South' for its operatic architectural ensembles and scholarly bent. Hire a bike and spend at least three or four days here before moving on to **Galatina**, its basilica awash with astounding frescoes. Head east to the fortified port of **Otranto** and the inviting beaches of the Baia dei Turchi, then push south along the wild, vertiginous coastline to **Santa Maria di Leuca**, the very tip of the Italian stiletto. Conclude your adventure in the island city of **Gallipoli**, feasting on raw sea urchin and octopus in its elegant town centre.



9 DAYS The Deep South

Start your soulful saunter in the cave city of **Matera**. Spend a couple of days exploring its famous *sassi*, as well as the *chiese rupestri* (cave churches) on a hike along the Gravina. From here, continue south to the Parco Nazionale del Pollino for a serious nature fix. Base yourself in **Terranova di Pollino** for four days, hiking through pine woods and beech forest to Basilicata's highest peak, Monte Pollino, and dancing to the *zampogne* (double-chantered pipes) in the Albanian villages of **San Paolo Albanese** and **San Costantino Albanese**. Don't leave the park without spotting the rare Bosnian pine tree, *pino loricato*. Lungs filled with mountain air, it's time to head west to the gorgeous coastal gem of **Maratea**. Pass a couple of days soothing your muscles in the town's crystalline Tyrrhenian waters, kicking back at local bars and feasting on fresh seafood. From here, head south to Calabria on the SS18 coastal road. If it's September, you might catch a chilli-eating competition in **Diamante**. Otherwise, keep moving until you reach Calabria's most arresting coastal town, **Tropea**, where your journey ends with piercing views and sunsets.

Map Legend

Sights

- Beach
- Bird Sanctuary
- Buddhist
- Castle/Palace
- Christian
- Confucian
- Hindu
- Islamic
- Jain
- Jewish
- Monument
- Museum/Gallery/Historic Building
- Ruin
- Shinto
- Sikh
- Taoist
- Winery/Vineyard
- Zoo/Wildlife Sanctuary
- Other Sight

Activities, Courses & Tours

- Bodysurfing
- Diving
- Canoeing/Kayaking
- Course/Tour
- Sento Hot Baths/Onsen
- Skiing
- Snorkelling
- Surfing
- Swimming/Pool
- Walking
- Windsurfing
- Other Activity

Sleeping

- Sleeping
- Camping

Eating

- Eating

Drinking & Nightlife

- Drinking & Nightlife
- Cafe

Entertainment

- Entertainment

Shopping

- Shopping

Information

- Bank
- Embassy/Consulate
- Hospital/Medical
- Internet
- Police
- Post Office
- Telephone
- Toilet
- Tourist Information
- Other Information

Geographic

- Beach
- Gate
- Hut/Shelter
- Lighthouse
- Lookout
- Mountain/Volcano
- Oasis
- Park
- Pass
- Picnic Area
- Waterfall

Population

- Capital (National)
- Capital (State/Province)
- City/Large Town
- Town/Village

Transport

- Airport
- Border crossing
- Bus
- Cable car/Funicular
- Cycling
- Ferry
- Metro station
- Monorail
- Parking
- Petrol station
- Subway station
- Taxi
- Train station/Railway
- Tram
- Underground station
- Other Transport

Routes

- Tollway
- Freeway
- Primary
- Secondary
- Tertiary
- Lane
- Unsealed road
- Road under construction
- Plaza/Mall
- Steps
- Tunnel
- Pedestrian overpass
- Walking Tour
- Walking Tour detour
- Path/Walking Trail

Boundaries

- International
- State/Province
- Disputed
- Regional/Suburb
- Marine Park
- Cliff
- Wall

Hydrography

- River, Creek
- Intermittent River
- Canal
- Water
- Dry/Salt/Intermittent Lake
- Reef

Areas

- Airport/Runway
- Beach/Desert
- Cemetery (Christian)
- Cemetery (Other)
- Glacier
- Mudflat
- Park/Forest
- Sight (Building)
- Sportsground
- Swamp/Mangrove

Note: Not all symbols displayed above appear on the maps in this book



OUR STORY

A beat-up old car, a few dollars in the pocket and a sense of adventure. In 1972 that's all Tony and Maureen Wheeler needed for the trip of a lifetime – across Europe and Asia overland to Australia. It took several months, and at the end – broke but inspired – they sat at their kitchen table writing and stapling together their first travel guide, *Across Asia on the Cheap*. Within a week they'd sold 1500 copies. Lonely Planet was born.

Today, Lonely Planet has offices in Franklin, London, Melbourne, Oakland, Beijing and Delhi, with more than 600 staff and writers. We share Tony's belief that 'a great guidebook should do three things: inform, educate and amuse'.

OUR WRITERS



Cristian Bonetto

Coordinating Author, Naples & Campania Despite his northern Italian background, espresso-guzzling Cristian is an ardent fan of the country's sunbaked south. A one-time writer of farce and TV drama, the Melbourne-born writer is hooked on the region's penchant for intensity, irony and extremes. Cristian has both lived and holidayed in the *Bel paese* (Beautiful Country), his musing on the country's food, culture and inimitable style appearing in newspapers, magazines and websites across the globe. To date, Cristian has contributed to over 30 Lonely Planet guides, including *Italy, Naples & the Amalfi Coast, Venice & The Veneto, New York City, Denmark, and Singapore*. You can follow Cristian's globe-trotting adventures on Twitter (@CristianBonetto) and Instagram (rexcat75).



Gregor Clark

Sicily Gregor caught the Italy bug at age 14 while living in Florence with his professor dad, who took him to see every fresco, mosaic and museum within a 1000km radius. He's lived in Florence and Le Marche, huffed and puffed across the Dolomites while researching LP's *Cycling Italy* and contributed to three previous editions of this guide. A lifelong polyglot with a Romance Languages degree, Gregor has written for Lonely Planet since 2000, with an emphasis on Mediterranean Europe and Latin America.



Brendan Sainsbury

Puglia, Basilicata & Calabria An expat Brit from Hampshire, England, now living near Vancouver, Canada; Brendan has covered Italy five times for Lonely Planet reporting on 16 of its 20 regions. For this edition he suffered horizontal rain in Matera and spent three minutes in a decontamination chamber in Reggio di Calabria. When not scribbling research notes for Lonely Planet in countries such as Cuba, Peru, Spain and Canada, Brendan likes to run up mountains, strum his flamenco guitar, and experience the pain and occasional pleasure of following Southampton Football Club.

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