



GOURMET IMMERSION

IN

Puglia

A Culinary Tour in Southern Italy
with The Chopping Block + Onward Travel

May 3—10, 2027

ONWARD TRAVEL ✈️
EST 2014

The
**Chopping
Block**



BREAD COMING OUT OF THE ANCIENT STONE OVEN IN ALTAMURA

Join The Chopping Block, Chicago's premier recreational cooking school, for a gourmet enthusiast's tour of Puglia! This region of Southern Italy is an ancient place with some of the most enduring regional food & wine traditions and dishes in all of Italy. Come along in May 2027 to discover it with us...

In Puglia you'll find a place with a deep soul, and what many say is the best food in the country. Puglia is home to burrata cheese, most of Italy's olive trees, beautiful Adriatic seascapes, and antique towns that will take your breath away. This adventure is a special opportunity to visit a lesser-known corner of Italy, though that is changing rapidly as the region's stellar reputation continues to spread internationally.

This tour is an especially exciting opportunity for food lovers because one of your dynamic pair of co-hosts, Viktorija Todorovska, is a cookbook author who has written a book about the cuisine of Puglia. Before she moved to France, where she now lives, Viktorija taught classes at The Chopping Block and she is also a certified sommelier. Traveling with Viktorija, along with a likeminded small group, will surely add depth to the connections you will make with the terroir, the food & wine, and each other.

The region's cuisine has peasant roots, meaning it always was and still is inspired by what's local and seasonal with an emphasis on vegetables, legumes, olive oil, fresh pasta, and locally made cheeses. Enjoy a week of fabulous meals accompanied by a generous amount of local wine. A long time favorite getaway destination of Italians, Puglia will ignite your senses from the fields of blooming wildflowers, to the rich purple primitivo wine, to the bright blue expansive sky.



IMAGINE YOURSELF...

Looking back at the coastline at sunset, glass of bubbly in hand

Sampling the best bread in Italy, straight from a giant wood-fired oven

Learning about unique regional wine varietals, pasta shapes, cheeses, pastries and more...

Setting Off from Bari

DAY 1: MONDAY MAY 3

- Taste perfect olive oil at an ancient family-owned olive estate
- Check into a historic boutique hotel in the heart of gorgeous Lecce

Our tour will begin midday in Bari today. Bari is the capital city of Puglia and a great place to explore on your own if you wish to arrive a night or two early. We will set off from the city with a packed lunch in tow, on our way to Salento, the southern part of the region where we'll be staying in the beautiful city of Lecce.

Midway, we have a special stop in store to dive right into one of the jewel's in Puglia's culinary crown: olive oil. The region is home to millions of olive trees, many of them centuries old, and produces about 40% of all the olive oil in Italy - more than any other region. We're visiting a family-owned masseria, the local word for a farmhouse estate, which is surrounded by ancient olive trees. An immediate immersion into local terroir will do well to establish our sense of place and the passionate owner of the estate will take us on a little tour and then guide us through an educational olive oil tasting... liquid gold indeed!

This afternoon we arrive at our home for the next three nights in the heart of Lecce: Palazzo de Noha Boutique Hotel. This complex was once a children's hospital built at the turn of the 16th century by a nobleman, Francesco de Noha and his wife, Marzia, as an act of charity. The historic buildings have been redesigned and restored with great care by the current owners, keeping in place the monumentality and typical Lecce building elements.

Lecce is undoubtedly the most elegant city of Puglia and one of its main cultural hubs as the capital of the region known as Salento, the southern tip of Puglia. Spending three nights here will be a lot of fun. After we've checked in to the hotel, our charming local guide Michele is meeting us for an early evening stroll, or *passeggiata*, during which he'll introduce us to this dynamic, historic city. Michele is a proud local Puglian, passionate about the history of his region, and we'll see him a lot this week. Our stroll ends at a great local restaurant for a convivial dinner of beautifully prepared local cuisine. Raise your glass to the coming days in Salento!

Meals Packed Lunch, Dinner



MAKING THE LOCAL PASTA SHAPE ORECCHIETTE OR "LITTLE EARS"

All About Local Wine

DAY 2: TUESDAY MAY 4

- Visit one of Viktorija's favorite local wine producers
- Taste and discuss excellent examples of specifically Puglian wines

Enjoy the delicious breakfast at Palazzo de Noha as you will each morning of our stay here. Late morning we're headed out of town to visit one of your host Viktorija's favorite wine producers in Puglia: Cantele. Enjoy a guided tour of the facilities where this winery, more than a century old, produces their line of outstanding expressions of the local regional varietals. After the tour our group will sit down together for a beautiful lunch accompanied by ample pours of these wines and interesting discussion about their characteristics. Learn all about Puglian favorites like such as Primitivo, Negroamaro, Susumaniello and Verdeca as you drink and dine with travel friends.

Back in Lecce, tonight is a free evening.

Meals Breakfast, Lunch

A Day at Puglia Culinary Centre

DAY 3: WEDNESDAY MAY 5

- Spend an immersive day at a modern teaching kitchen in Salento
- Take time to wander in Lecce, exploring the shops and cafes

Today we are off for a special event sure to excite all culinary enthusiasts among us, a full day in the kitchen at the Puglia Culinary Centre at Castello di Ugento. This ultra-modern and professional teaching kitchen is located on the property of a thousand-year old castle, today a luxury hotel in the countryside of Salento. Roll up your sleeves and get busy learning how to make classic regional recipes with an accomplished team of teaching chefs.

Lunch will be a multi-course affair of the Puglian specialties you have prepared together, paired with excellent regional wines. But don't get too relaxed, because after lunch it's back into the kitchen! You'll spend the afternoon learning the secrets of making perfect Italian gelato at home and of course there must be some tasting to be done at the end of your class.

It's been a busy and educational day and back in the city tonight it's your last night in Lecce. Relax, do some shopping, and get packed up because in the morning you're headed to Valle d'Itria, Puglia's green heart full of hilltop villages and beautiful rural scenery.

Meals Breakfast, Lunch

“Capital Cities” of Puglia

DAY 4: THURSDAY MAY 6

- Visit a working ceramics factory with fabulous, unique products
- Gather at our elegant trulli estate for a wine tasting and dinner

This morning we bid farewell to lovely Lecce to make our way north to our accommodations for the next three nights: Borgo Canonica, a complex of conical trulli buildings, lovingly restored, with a pool and a bar and a delightful gourmet restaurant. On our way there we have plans to visit two important local places: Grottaglie, known as the “ceramics capital” of Puglia, and Ceglie Messapica, known as the province’s “food capital.”

Our guide, Michele, will meet us in Grottaglie first to introduce us to the artisanal ceramics tradition that has been practiced here for over one thousand years making use of locally extracted clay. We’ll visit an active workshop together and later have some time for souvenir shopping. Then we’re on to Ceglie Messapica, known as the gastronomic capital of Puglia (quite a distinction!) and lucky for us, Michele’s home town. This is a place of very ancient and proud origins, being one of the main centers of the Messapian civilization, the pre-Roman inhabitants of Southern Puglia. Our visit here will be both tasty and educational: first we’re having a very memorable lunch at a salumeria where the fresh products are super tasty and the owner is excited to welcome us as his guests. And then we’ll take a nice walk through the pristine old town, dominated by the massive medieval castle and the elegant mother church.

In the afternoon we’ll arrive at Borgo Canonica, perfectly situated in the bucolic heart of Puglia, a region known as Valle d’Itria. You’ll enjoy every chance you get to relax in the tranquil atmosphere of this unique trulli resort. Take time to settle in and then meet at the bar beside the pool for a guided wine tasting with Viktorija where you can swirl your glass and further discuss the delicious wines produced here in Puglia. Afterwards, it’s time to enjoy a delightful dinner at the Borgo’s restaurant. Cheers!

Meals Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



THE OWNER OF THE ULTIMATE SALUMERIA IN CEGLIE MESSAPICA

Oh, the Joy of Cheese & Bread

DAY 5: FRIDAY MAY 7

- Taste Italy’s favorite bread straight out of ancient wood-fired oven
- Spend a day with Puglia’s most famous cheesemaker

Start your day with a delicious breakfast at Borgo Canonica, featuring house baked cakes and a lovely spread of local products. This morning we’ll be up and on the road early to get to Altamura in time to see the bread coming out of the oven. This bread from the small city of Altamura is famous the world over, and tasting it as it comes out of the ancient wood fired-oven at a centuries-old family-owned bakery will be a highlight of our time in Puglia.

And did you know that another wonder of the culinary world, burrata cheese, is also a Puglian export? After we’ve spent time with the bakers its time to visit the cheesemakers at Caseificio DiCecca and learn about the process of making burrata and other types of locally beloved cheeses. Viktorija’s friend, Vito, is one of the younger members of the DiCecca family and through his clever sense of business and social media he has made quite a name for himself and his family’s cheese production. And for good reason! Cheese for the DiCecca family is life, and life is art, so does that mean their cheese is art? After you’ve tasted it, you might decide... yes! This will be a special and very delicious day you will not soon forget...

Tonight, back at Borgo Canonica, we’ll enjoy a fresh and casual dinner together and then get a good night’s sleep!

Meals Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Exploring Puglia's Green Heart

DAY 6: SATURDAY MAY 8

- Taste burrata cheese exactly as it was intended to be eaten: FRESH!
- Tour the typical towns of Valle d'Itria with our local guide

In order to make sure you have no regrets about your trip to Puglia, it makes sense to spend a little more time focused on that regional treasure, burrata cheese! Today's experience will be quite different from the day before as we're headed to an actual dairy farm to see the animals, meet the cheesemakers and learn about their production before we sit down to a delicious light lunch of fresh burrata and local accompaniments. From the farm we are just a few minutes way from what is perhaps the most famous destination in Puglia: Alberobello. We'll be with Michele one last time today and he will show us around this UNESCO site like no other, the birthplace of the unique *trulli* houses. We'll encounter an ancient rural civilization that has somehow managed not to disappear from this enchanting place.

Next we're going to Locorotondo where we'll walk together through another one of the most picturesque towns in central Puglia. This town is characterized by a unique skyline due to the *cummersa* roofs of the houses. Finally, we'll arrive in Cisternino, home to a beautifully preserved old town featuring narrow lanes, whitewashed houses and the sort of lively piazzas that give you a glimpse into traditional Italian life. But what Cisternino is really known for is its butcher shop restaurants and tonight we'll indulge in a classic local meal of grilled meats - the perfect thing paired with heavily structured local reds like primitivo!

Meals Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



From the Hills to the Sea

DAY 7: SUNDAY MAY 9

- Wander through the hidden piazzas of whitewashed Ostuni
- Head out on the water for a sunset toast looking back at the coast

There will be time this morning to soak up the country estate vibes of the masseria, as relaxing within the terroir is an essential part of the Puglian experience. For those who wish, a guided bike ride can be arranged this morning with E-bikes as an option.

As lunch time nears it's time to check out and head to nearby Ostuni. Known as "the white town," captivating Ostuni is one of the most iconic whitewashed hilltop towns in the region... replete with Eastern Mediterranean charm, the origins of this settlement date back to the dawn of mankind and Neanderthal civilizations. One of Viktorija's favorite restaurants in Puglia is here, Osteria Catedrale, and we'll enjoy a delightful Sunday lunch together before taking a little free time to shop and explore.

In the late afternoon we'll arrive at Hotel Palazzo Indelli in seaside Monopoli. A beautiful and historic city, it's a great place for us to spend our last night and breathe in a little bit of sea air. Take a stroll through the city to soak in its authentic "lived in" atmosphere of real Italian life. We'll walk together to the port, still used by working fishermen, to hop on a pair of boats which will take us out into the Adriatic Sea. As the sun sets, let's look back at the coastline, with its ancient fortifications and small pocket beaches, raise a glass and toast to this spectacular peninsula! Back on land, we're headed out to dine as a group one last time at a restaurant near our hotel where we'll surely wish to raise a glass to our travel companions after the fantastic week we've had exploring this dynamic and delicious region together.

Meals Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Arrivederci!

DAY 8: MONDAY MAY 10

Transfers to Bari Airport or city center will be arranged today based on traveler's departure times and continued travel plans.
Buon viaggio!

Meals Breakfast

BEGINS	Bari, Italy, on Monday, May 3 The tour begins with a mid-day pickup from Bari. If you are flying into Bari today (Airport code: BRI), please select a flight that lands before 12pm. Coming early is a great idea and Onward is happy to help you make plans.
ENDS	Monopoli, Italy, on Monday, May 10 No activities are scheduled today. Transfer provided to Bari Airport or city center.
SUITABILITY & MOBILITY	<u>This tour includes walking for 15-30 minutes at a time, plus stairs and cobblestones.</u> Travelers may always opt out of activities they deem too physically challenging but refunds will not be provided. Many of the ancient settlements we will be visiting were built into the existing landscape, so please be prepared for uneven terrain.
TOUR DATES & PRICE	May 3–10, 2027 <u>Tour Price</u> \$6,250 per traveler, double occupancy Single supplement +\$1220 per person <i>See sidebar if interested in twin beds or upgrades</i> <i>Contact Onward if you are interested in arriving early or extending your stay. Note that air travel is not included and a current passport is required for travel to Italy.</i> <i>You are welcome to pay by credit card, please add a 3% surcharge.</i>
AIR TRAVEL	The tour will start and end with transfers to/from Bari Airport (BRI). Please confirm flight plans with Onward Travel before booking and don't hesitate to contact us if you'd like any assistance finding the right itinerary.



VIKTORIJA TODOROVSKA & ANDREA MILLER Tour Hosts

Viktorija Todorovska is a wine educator and writer, formerly based in Chicago and now living in Provence. Viktorija is a Sommelier, fluent in Italian and author of two books about regional Italian cuisine. She is also an avid cyclist.

For over two decades **Andrea Miller** has been working to inspire home cooks with The Chopping Block, Chicago's renowned recreational cooking school. She lives in Florida with her pup, Chef, and enjoys gardening, reading, and stand up paddleboarding.

Trip price includes the following:

- Airport transfers and ground transportation to/from all scheduled activities.
- Three nights accommodations at [Palazzo de Noha Boutique Hotel](#) (Lecce, Italy), three nights at [Borgo Canonica](#) (Cisternino, Italy) and one night at [Hotel Palazzo Indelli](#) (Monopoli, Italy).
- Most meals: daily breakfasts, seven lunches, and five dinners. We've planned fantastic gourmet experiences with wine included.
- Local experts and guides and two Onward Travel hosts at your service.
- Activities, tastings, cooking classes, and tours as detailed in the itinerary.

Register now!

Visit onwardtravel.co/trip/puglia to complete the registration form and submit payment.

\$1,500 deposit due upon booking, balance due by February 1, 2027.

ADDITIONAL LODGING OPTIONS & PRICING:

Upgrades Available

Upgrade to a Suite at Palazzo de Noha, Lecce

~ \$350 per room for the 3-night stay

Upgrade to a Suite at Borgo Canonica, Valle d'Itria

~ \$210 per room for the 3-night stay

Please note for those who will share a twin room

At two of our hotels, Palazzo de Noha and Palazzo Indelli, rooms with twin beds are available.

However at Borgo Canonica (3 nights) they are not.

Your options are:

- Share a room with one queen bed and a sofa bed
~ Standard double occupancy rate

- Each take your own room for the three-night stay at Borgo Canonica and share a twin bed room the other four nights of the trip
~ Additional \$480 per traveler

Please take note of the following useful information, and view more at www.onwardtravel.co/letsgo



Once Onward Travel receives your registration form, we will send you an **invoice** with instructions to pay the **deposit**.



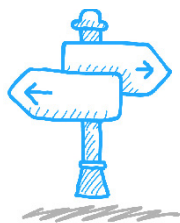
If you'd like to purchase **trip insurance**, we suggest Travelex. For more info, call them at 800-228-9792 or visit www.travelex.com and refer to location number 32-0704.



Four to six weeks before the tour **we will mail you a packet** with a packing list, traveler directory and other useful info.



Make sure you know where your **passport** is now! For travel to Europe, it should be valid for three months past your return date.



Onward Travel's cancellation policy in a nutshell:

- \$250 of your initial deposit is nonrefundable
- Cancel within 90 days and the full deposit is nonrefundable
- Cancel within 60 days and 50% of total trip fee is nonrefundable
- Cancel within 30 days and the full trip fee is nonrefundable

See the full *Terms & Conditions* at www.onwardtravel.co/terms



Get in Touch!

Contact Onward Travel with questions or special requests:
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