

How many days should you allow for your Puglia road trip?



## How many days should you allow for your Puglia road trip?

By Floriane

If you're planning a trip to southern Italy, you're probably wondering: **how many days should you allow for your Puglia road trip?** Is a long weekend enough? Should you plan a week? Or 10 days to really enjoy Bari, Alberobello, Polignano a Mare, Monopoli, Lecce, Matera and the beaches?

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Rest assured, this is exactly the question we asked ourselves before our stay. Puglia looks simple enough to organize on a map, but the region is big, distances can be misleading and there's a lot to see.

We discovered **Puglia during our [tour of Europe](#)**, and this region is clearly one of our favorites in Italy. Here you'll find white villages, trulli, baroque towns, turquoise beaches, incredible cuisine and that southern ambience that makes you want to slow down.

In our opinion, **7 days in Puglia is the ideal length of time** for a first discovery. **3 to 4 days give a good overview**, especially around Bari, Alberobello, Monopoli and Polignano a Mare. **10 days are ideal** for driving down to Lecce, Otranto and Gallipoli, and enjoying the beaches to the full.

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## Puglia in 3 days

If you've only got **3 days to visit Puglia**, you're going to have to make some choices. The region is too vast to see it all in one long weekend.

In that case, we recommend you concentrate **on northern Puglia and the Itria Valley**. This is the most convenient area if you arrive in **Bari**, and already allows you to see several must-sees without spending your time on the road.

**Day 1:** Start in **Bari**, the easiest gateway to Puglia. Stroll through Bari, watch the nonnas preparing **orecchiette in the alleyways**, then take time to reach the seaside.

In the afternoon, set off for [Polignano a Mare](#) (40-minute drive), one of the most photogenic villages on the coast. The view of Lama Monachile, the houses perched above the sea and the cliffs immediately sets the tone.

☐ **Activity:** in **Polignano a Mare**, we really recommend booking a [boat tour of the caves](#). This is one of our favorite activities in Puglia, as it allows you to see the cliffs from the sea and discover several caves around the town.

☐ To sleep in Polignano a Mare: [info and booking for the superbly located Hotel D'aprile Dimore](#) with its large rooftop terrace

**Day 2: Monopoli** (15-minute drive), with its white houses, small port and charming alleyways. It's a town we really liked, gentler and more pleasant than some of the more touristy stops. Depending on the season, leave some time to enjoy the beaches around Monopoli.

☐ To sleep in this area, our favorite is the [Masseria San Francesco](#) a beautiful address surrounded by olive groves, perfect for experiencing Puglia in a different way.

**Day 3:** Finish your day by heading for the village of **Alberobello** (30-minute drive), famous for its trulli, small white houses with conical roofs. The village is very busy

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during the day, so try to get there early in the morning for a more leisurely experience. Afterwards, take time to lose yourself in the Itria valley, among olive groves, low stone walls and white villages, before returning to Bari.

→ To organize this short break, please consult our articles dedicated to [Bari](#), [Polignano a Mare](#), [Alberobello](#) and [Monopoli](#).

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## **Puglia in 5 days**

With **5 days in Puglia**, your stay already becomes much more diversified. You can see the must-sees in the north, add the town of Matera, and start heading down towards Lecce.

This is a good length of time if you want to discover Puglia without necessarily doing the whole heel of the Italian boot. .

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**Day 1:** Arrive in **Bari**, collect your [rental car](#) and head for **Matera** (1h drive). Matera is technically in the Basilicata region, not Puglia, but it would be a shame to pass so close without stopping. The **Sassi**, the rock-cut dwellings, the staircase lanes and the sunset views make the town truly unique.

☐ To sleep in Matera, we recommend [Il Belvedere Matera](#) an address set in a renovated traditional dwelling.

**Day 2:** Head for **Alberobello** and the Itria Valley. Stroll through the village and enjoy the views, then continue on to the surrounding area to see a quieter side of the region. For example, we recommend a stop at **Locorotondo**, a lovely white hilltop village, much more peaceful than Alberobello, with its flower-filled lanes, little squares and views over the countryside. Along the way, take time to admire the olive groves and small villages.

☐ We advise you to sleep in Monopoli, we recommend [Palazzo Indelli](#) very well located in the old town, on a pretty square with restaurants nearby.

**Day 3:** Spend the day in **Polignano a Mare** (30-minute drive) and **Monopoli**. The two towns are close to each other, and can be combined very well on the same day. Polignano will impress you with its cliffs, while Monopoli will seduce you with its port and white streets.

☐ We still recommend sleeping in Monopoli (to avoid having to change lodgings every night), at the [Palazzo Indelli](#)

**Day 4:** Take the road to **Ostuni** (38-minute drive), the famous “white city”. It’s a great place to stroll through the narrow streets, enjoy the views and take a break on a terrace. Continue on to **Lecce**, one of the most beautiful towns in Puglia in our opinion.

☐ We still recommend staying overnight in Monopoli (30 minutes away) at the [Palazzo Indelli](#)

**Day 5:** Spend the day in **Lecce** (1h20 drive). The town is famous for its Baroque architecture, gilded facades, sculpted churches and large, lively squares. It’s a stopover we really recommend, and then return to Bari.

→ To help you prepare for this part of your stay, take a look at our guides to [Matera](#), [Alberobello](#) and [Lecce](#).

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## Puglia in 7 days

In our opinion, **7 days in Puglia** is the ideal length of time for a first real discovery. You'll have time to see the must-sees without running around too much, and to vary between villages, beaches, historic towns and good addresses.

For 7 days, we recommend you book 3 or 4 accommodations,

For example, the pretty **coastal** town **of Monopoli** is a good option for exploring the region.

- **Day 1 - Bari → visit Matera:** after arriving in Bari, collect your car then head straight to **Matera** to discover the Sassi, the rock-cut alleyways and the sunset views.
  - ☐ Stay at [Il Belvedere Matera](#) (to sleep in a Sassi)
- **Day 2 - Matera → visit Alberobello:** take the road to **Alberobello** to explore the trulli districts, then add a stop at **Locorotondo**, a quieter white village full of charm.
  - ☐ Lodging at [Masseria San Francesco](#) (if you want to try out a typical masseria) or directly at [Palazzo Indelli in Monopoli](#).
- **Day 3 - Alberobello → Polignano a Mare:** devote the day to **Polignano a**

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**Mare**, with its old town perched on the cliffs, the Lama Monachile beach and, weather permitting, a boat trip to the caves.

☐ [Book the boat trip to the caves.](#)

- **Day 4 - Monopoli + beaches:** enjoy **Monopoli**, its little port, its white streets and the surrounding beaches for a gentler day of strolling and swimming.

☐ For days 3 and 4: stay at [Palazzo Indelli in Monopoli](#).

- **Day 5 - Monopoli → Ostuni → Lecce:** take a break in **Ostuni**, the white city of Puglia, before heading to **Lecce** at the end of the day for a first stroll through the historic center.
- **Day 6 - Lecce:** spend the day in **Lecce**, one of Puglia's most beautiful towns, known for its Baroque facades, carved churches and lively evening atmosphere.
- ☐ For days 5 and 6 stay at [7Rooms Guest House in Lecce](#).
- **Day 7 - Rock formations + beaches:** end your stay on the Salento coast, around **Otranto**, to enjoy the rock formations, coves and turquoise waters before hitting the road again.

→ To choose your swimming spots, please consult our guide to the [most beautiful beaches in Puglia](#).

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## Puglia in 10 days

In our opinion, **10 days in Puglia** is the perfect length for a complete road trip. You'll have time to discover the must-sees, head down to Salento, enjoy the beaches and keep a more leisurely pace.

For 10 days, we advise you to book **4 or 5 accommodations** to avoid long journeys:

- 1 night in Matera : [Il Belvedere Matera](#)
- 3 nights in the Itria Valley or Monopoli (ideal for exploring northern Apulia): [Masseria San Francesco](#) or [Palazzo Indelli in Monopoli](#)
- 5 in Lecce (ideally located for exploring the southern Apulia region) : [7Rooms Guest House in Lecce](#).
- **Day 1 - Bari → visit Matera:** after arriving in [Bari](#), collect your car then head straight to [Matera](#) to discover the Sassi, troglodyte lanes and sunset views.
  - ☐ Stay at [Il Belvedere Matera](#) to sleep in a typical setting overlooking the Sassi.
- **Day 2 - Matera → Alberobello → Locorotondo:** take the road to [Alberobello](#) to explore the trulli districts, then add a stop at **Locorotondo**, a quieter white village full of charm.
  - ☐ Stay at. [Masseria San Francesco](#) if you want to try out a typical masseria, or go directly to [Palazzo Indelli in Monopoli](#).
- **Day 3 - Polignano a Mare:** devote the day to [Polignano a Mare](#), with its old town perched on the cliffs, the Lama Monachile beach and, weather permitting, a boat trip to the caves.
  - ☐ [Book the boat trip to the caves](#).
- **Day 4 - Monopoli + beaches:** enjoy [Monopoli](#), its little port, its white streets and the surrounding beaches for a gentler day of strolling, swimming and ice cream on the terrace.
  - ☐ **For days 2, 3 and 4:** stay at [Palazzo Indelli in Monopoli](#).
- **Day 5 - Ostuni → Lecce:** take a break in **Ostuni**, the white city of Puglia, before heading to [Lecce](#) at the end of the day for a first stroll through the historic center.

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- **Day 6 - Lecce:** Spend the day in [Lecce](#), one of Puglia's most beautiful towns, known for its Baroque facades, carved churches and lively nightlife.
- **Day 7 - Otranto + Adriatic coast:** head for **Otranto** to discover its historic center, its cathedral and the wilder landscapes of the Adriatic coast.
- **Day 8 - Rock formations + Salento beaches:** explore the most beautiful natural spots around Otranto, between coves, turquoise waters and rock formations such as **Grotta della Poesia** or **Torre Sant'Andrea**.
- **Day 9 - Gallipoli + Ionian coast:** head to **Gallipoli** to discover its old town set on a peninsula, then enjoy the beaches of the Ionian coast, more seaside and perfect for a break.

☐ **F or days 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9** : stay at [7Rooms Guest House in Lecce](#)

- **Day 10 - Return to Bari:** take a leisurely drive up to Bari, allowing around **2h30 from Gallipoli**, with a possible final stop at the beach or village, depending on your flight schedule.

➔ To organize this more complete road trip, see also our main article on [what to do in Puglia](#) and our guide on [where to sleep in Puglia](#).

## Distances and travel times in Puglia

To help you choose the right duration, here are a few route benchmarks. Distances aren't always huge, but between ZTLs, parking lots, back roads and photo breaks, time flies.

Route	Approximate time	Ideal for
Bari - Polignano a Mare	Approx. 35 min.	Half-day or full-day with Monopoli
Bari - Monopoli	Approx. 40 min.	A day on the coast
Bari - Alberobello	Approx. 1 hour	Discover the trulli
Bari - Matera	Approx. 1 hour	A day or night on site
Monopoli - Ostuni	Approx. 40 min.	Heading south
Ostuni - Lecce	Approx. 1 hour	Reaching Salento
Lecce - Otranto	Approx. 40 min.	A day on the beach and in the old town
Lecce - Gallipoli	Approx. 30 minutes	Crossing the Salento

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<b>Route</b>	<b>Approximate time</b>	<b>Ideal for</b>
Gallipoli - Bari	Approx. 2h30	Return at the end of your stay

This chart explains why **3 days in Puglia are too short to see everything**, but also why **7 to 10 days** allow us to spread out the stages more evenly.

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## How many days do you need, depending on your profile?

<b>Profile</b>	<b>Ideal duration</b>	<b>Why?</b>
Long weekend	3 days	To discover Bari, Polignano, Monopoli and Alberobello
First complete overview	5 days	To add Matera, Ostuni and Lecce
First real road trip	7 days	To see the must-sees without running around too much
Family travel	7 to 10 days	Slow down and enjoy the beaches
Complete road trip in Puglia	10 days or more	To add Otranto, Gallipoli and Salento

## Car rental in Puglia

In our opinion, a car is almost indispensable for visiting Puglia. It makes it easy to reach the villages, beaches, masserie and wilder parts of the region.

This is also what we recommend in our complete guide: renting a car means you can get into every nook and cranny and stop whenever you like, especially for photo breaks and small villages.

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Bear in mind, however, that Italian driving can be sporty. In many cities, you'll also find **ZTLs**, limited traffic zones reserved for local residents. The easiest way is to park outside the historic center and walk the rest of the way.

☐ To compare prices, we use [DiscoverCars at Bari airport](#). It's handy for comparing rental companies, rates, deposits and insurance.

☐ [Compare car rental deals in Bari airport on DiscoverCars](#)

## Where to stay to visit Puglia?

The choice of accommodation is important, as Puglia can rarely be visited from a single base. To avoid too much driving, it's best to change base 2 or 3 times, depending on the length of your stay.

For a short stay, you can sleep around **Bari, Monopoli or Alberobello**. For a week, it's best to divide your nights between **Matera, the Itria/Monopoli valley** and **Lecce**.

- **Matera** : [Il Belvedere Matera](#) in a renovated traditional dwelling;
- **Alberobello / Itria Valley** : [Masseria San Francesco](#) a superb guest house surrounded by olive trees;
- **Monopoli** : [Palazzo Indelli](#) very well located in the old town;
- **Lecce**: [7Rooms Guest House](#) The Guest House is a convenient base for visiting the historic center.

Remember to book early, especially in high season, as accommodation in Puglia fills up fast.

→ For more details, see our full article on [where to sleep in Puglia](#).

## Activities to visit Puglia

To discover the many points of interest in this extraordinary region, boat tours, bike tours, Segway tours, ice cream tastings... you can book your **activity in advance via the Internet**.

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We recommend you explore the [GetYourGuide](#) website, which offers a range of activities at attractive prices, with a cancellation option up to 24 hours before the start of the activity.

- [Cruise to Polignano a mare with aperitif](#)
- [Cruise from Monopoli](#)
- [Cooking classes in Polignano A Mare](#)

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## When is the best time to visit Puglia?

In our opinion, the best time to visit Puglia is in **spring** and **early autumn**. The months of **May, June, September and October** are perfect for enjoying the region, with pleasant temperatures and fewer crowds than in midsummer.

- ☐ **In spring**, landscapes are green, villages are lively without being crowded and temperatures are perfect for visiting Bari, Alberobello, Lecce or Matera.
- \* **In summer**, Puglia is superb, but the number of visitors explodes, especially in August. Prices go up, beaches fill up fast and parking can get tricky.
- ☐ **In September**, it's still very pleasant to enjoy the beaches. It's the month we chose as it was a great compromise for combining swimming, villages and road trips.
- \* **In winter**, the region is much quieter. It's possible to visit the cities, but it's not the best time of year if you come mainly for the beaches and the summer atmosphere.

We've tried to give you a **quick overview of the main things to do in Puglia**. For more details, we invite you to consult our articles dedicated to each location.

To help you prepare for your stay, read our guides on

- [Visit Bari](#)
- [What to do in Matera](#)
- [Alberobello](#)

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- [Polignano a Mare](#)
- [Visit Monopoli](#)
- What to see in [Lecce](#)
- [Puglia's most beautiful beaches.](#)

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