



Gastronomic Puglia Immersion with Peta Mathias 2 - 9 September 2018

Chef Peta Mathias

Peta lives her love of sensual food. She owned restaurants in New Zealand and in Paris and has written twelve books combining her passion for food, travel and social comment. The latest book is 'Beat Till Stiff' – a series of essays with the uniting theme of transformation. The latest book is a culinary travel log centered around her tours to India. It might be called 'Hot Pink Spice Saga' and was published by Random House in November 2104. She has been presenting prime time food/travel television shows since 1995 screening in New Zealand and eight international territories. She has her own New Zealand olive oil pressed by the Village Press, has her own live road show, a Saturday agony aunt column in the Dominion Post and hosts week-long culinary adventures in the South of France, Marrakech, the Basque Country, Puglia and India. In 2012 Peta was made a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit for Services as an Author and Television Presenter. She tries not to wear her medal to the supermarket. "My thing is regional, traditional food – writing about it, cooking it, loving it and protecting it."



Your accommodation:

For the first four nights you'll be staying at the Suite Hotel Santa Chiara, a stylish restored palazzo, just alongside the gorgeous baroque church of Santa Chiara. The hotel is just steps from some of Lecce's most amazing Baroque masterpieces and you can enjoy the convenience of visiting Lecce's many treasures on foot. www.santachiaralecce.it



Next you'll be based at Masseria Montenapoleone, a beautifully restored farmhouse in the very heart of Puglia. What makes this place stand out from other lodgings is how the owners have lovingly restored every detail to maintain harmony with the original architecture and in particular with nature. Naturally breakfast each morning is brimming with homemade produce from the estate, from delicious preserves to freshly baked cakes. The Masseria has two kitchens which we can use for our cooking classes. The rooms are individually decorated and feature wooden beams, original antique floors and country-style furnishings. www.masseriamontenapoleone.com





Day 1 - Sunday 2 Sept

At around 7pm we will meet in the hotel bar of the Suite Hotel Santa Chiara and head straight out to a wonderful café nearby for an aperitivo and a general introduction to our week. We will carry on to dinner for a feast of authentic local Salentino food, like *tiella* with potatoes and mussels or *fave e cicorie* - fave bean purée and chicory. This is a homey and very unpretentious place with cuisine to match, and provides the perfect introduction to the basics of the gastronomy of the region. After dinner, we will stroll home to the hotel through the old town, maybe stopping for a gelato in one of the town's renowned gelateria. (D)

Day 2 – Monday 3 Sept

After a buffet breakfast on the rooftop we meet up at around 10am with our charming guide for a cultural tour of Lecce, with its astonishing Baroque architecture that has earned it the nickname, the Florence of the South. The walking tour will last about two and a half hours and take in many of the city's most important and interesting places. Lunch, which we are afraid has to remain a surprise - a very worthwhile one, so we are sure you won't mind a little mystery - is followed by siesta (simply nothing happens in the afternoons here!) then at 5pm we will meet up with local chef, Gianna Greco, to visit the wonderful food market, the Mercato Porta Rudiae, to buy food for her evening cooking class, dinner and wine tasting. We wander home after..... full, happy and wiser. (B, L, D)

Day 3 - Tuesday 4 Sept

This morning we have given you time to explore and shop on your own as we are leaving Lecce tomorrow for the country and this represents your best opportunity for retail therapy. In any case, we can provide some excellent shopping tips. We will meet at one of our favourite café restaurants and just around the corner from the hotel, around 1pm for lunch, followed by the obligatory siesta. Come late afternoon, and the also obligatory aperitivo, we will join our friend Angelo and his Mama in the kitchens of Gambero Rosso Restaurant for a

short presentation followed by an outrageous feast from the sea. Once again, we will waddle back to the hotel, with ice cream stops for the recidivists. (B, L, D)

Day 4 - Wednesday 5 Sept

After breakfast this morning we say goodbye to Lecce and head north to our next destination, the Masseria Montenapoleone. We will leave at around ten am to give us time to stop for a wine tasting and lunch at the very progressive and delicious Li Veli Winery. The wine maker himself will show us around the estate and initiate us into the secrets of the wine-making process, then pair different wines with each of our dishes at lunch. Afterwards, we also stop at Brancati, one of the oldest olive oil producing farms in the world. The estate is home to countless ancient olive trees, some dating back thousands of years. We arrive at Masseria Montenapoleone late afternoon, and settle in before having the inevitable aperitivo and dinner. (B, L, D)

Day 5 – Thursday 6 Sept

You can't come to Italy and not make pasta! This morning's cooking class is given over to those two legendary Italian phenomena: pasta and mama's cooking. And we will enjoy both for lunch as well. The traditional pasta of Puglia is called "orecchiette" and looks simple to make, but to make the perfect 'little ear' form is harder than it looks! After the obligatory siesta we visit a cheese factory to see the production of mozzarella and its wildly indulgent cousin, burrata. **We'll get up-close and personal** with the cheese-making process and even try your hand on twisting a knot or two. Next we visit the fairytale village of Alberobello to see the unique cone-roofed trulli houses with our animated local guide. **We'll take** a walk around and then dine at one of our great finds in Cisternino. (B, L, D)

Day 6 - Friday 7 Sept

Today, we drive to the extraordinary city of Matera, UNESCO World Heritage Site. Perched high on a beautiful hillside and only recently seen by foreign eyes, the city is filled with 'sassi', ancient cave

dwellings restored for current use as homes, shops and restaurants. The Passion of Christ was filmed here and as you walk around you will truly feel like you have stepped back in time. **We'll have** lunch at a great local restaurant. On returning to the Masseria, there will be time for some relaxation and a night off from the festivities. (B, L)

Day 7 - Saturday 8 Sept

After breakfast today we will stock up on a few things for a picnic as we have been invited out for a fishing

trip along the Adriatic Coast. Late afternoon, we start making preparations for our gala farewell dinner at the Masseria with guest chef, Tiziano Mita. And so goes the night.... (B, L, D)

Day 8 - Sunday 9 Sept

After breakfast, final farewells and transfers to your next destination. We hope that you will have enjoyed your experience of Puglia and **the region's cuisine**. We are sure you will be changed for the better after your time in Puglia, for it is a place that has changed us. (B)

What's Included

- An outstanding culinary travel experience
- Peace of mind knowing you are with the most professional travel and tour company in Puglia
- **3 nights'** lodging at Suite Hotel Santa Chiara in Lecce
- 4 nights' lodging at Masseria Montenapoleone, near Pezze di Greco
- 2 cooking courses (with local chefs)
- 7 breakfasts; 6 lunches and 6 dinners
- **Local guides with insider knowledge of the region's secrets and mysteries**
- All shuttles related to above itinerary, including arrival and departure transfers from and to Brindisi Airport
- Special activities each day including:
 - Olive oil tasting
 - Wine tasting
 - Cheese making

Arrival & Departure Logistics

The arrival transfer on Sunday 2 Sept will depart Brindisi Airport for Lecce around 1pm. Our 24 hour emergency contact number is 0039 338 131 8026.

€3250 per person based on double occupancy

A word of warning:

Italians, especially southern Italians, do things very late. We have hummed and haa-ed about how to deal with this and decided the only way to make the most of this wonderful area is to go with the locals, so expect late nights, slow mornings and lazy afternoons

