

# CRUISE DESTINATION TARANTO

Destination of the Year 2022 at the Seatrade Cruise Awards



# CRUISE DESTINATION TARANTO

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Watch the «Port of Taranto...  
for cruise lovers» video here!



# WHY TARANTO?



Download the Port Network Authority of the Ionian Sea  
Three-Year Operational Plan 2023-2025

The Port of Taranto is an **emerging destination** in the cruise industry. Taranto boasts a privileged position in the *heart of the Mediterranean Sea*, as it is **beautifully set along Puglia region**, the longest coastline of any region in mainland Italy.

**Puglia** is nowadays becoming more and more popular as the region is witnessing a tourist boom: thousands of travelers from across the globe choose this high-end destination as they are falling head over heels for the pleasures of the unspoiled southern Italy.

The Port of Taranto is a member of



- The competitive and strategic position of the port of Taranto in the Mediterranean basin makes it the **ideal hub for discovering the main destinations of Southern Italy** and its surrounding areas.
- From Taranto, the coast embraces the Ionian Sea and overlooks the beauties of a **land rich in history, culture and natural wonders** of great interest.
- Southern Italy is around the corner and the crystal waters of the Med will easily take travelers on adventures along the unexplored coasts of **Albania, Croatia, Greece and Montenegro** which, in the recent years, have experienced a massive increase in foreign tourism.
- **Taranto is the ideal destination for bringing the Italian West and the East coasts together** during a cruise in the Med. Thanks to its strategic position it would potentially be included in the itineraries of those cruise ships whose route maps seem to still have place for a new destination giving access to the unspoiled beauty of another slice of Italy.
- Some of the best sea-spots in mainland Italy are in Taranto that is perfectly located on the beautiful Ionian Sea.
- Cruising the Med from Taranto can be a good way to visit several places in one trip as the port can be considered as a new stopover between the major cruise destinations in Italy



# SUSTAINABLE CRUISE GROWTH STRATEGY

## *Unleashing the potential of Taranto as a cruise destination*

Since 2013 the Port Network Authority of the Ionian Sea (PNAIS) has worked to promote cruise traffic in the framework of the strategy of diversification of port activities.

The aim of the PNAIS is to implement a precise strategy to **promote cruise destination Taranto** and **create new cruise tourism-related business opportunities** with the final goal to change the economic outlook of the port-city of Taranto, mainly related to the steel industry and oil refinery, and **shape the future of Taranto**.

The Port Network Authority could leverage on a number of competitive factors, first of all the local cultural and natural heritage which make Taranto unique in the Mediterranean. The Port of Taranto is endowed with state-of-the-art infrastructure – having inaugurated only in November 2021 the new East Side of the Pier 1, the new berthing point for cruise ships. Furthermore, Taranto is strategically connected to 3 main airports by bottleneck-free roads allowing the opportunity to develop fly&cruise services.



The collaboration with the Taranto Cruise Port has played since 2021 a key role in boosting the development of the cruise traffic. Partnerships with international leading associations such as CLIA, MedCruise and AIVP ensures platforms for promotion and networking. Stakeholder engagement to stimulate the growth of the cruise ecosystem and the fruitful collaboration with stakeholders, first of all with the Municipality, represent points of strength for the Taranto port.

Success for Taranto as a cruise destination was marked by the **Seatrade Cruise Award as Destination of the Year 2022**, which recognized the efforts made by the Port Network Authority as well as the growth of the destination.

In 2023 the partnership with Costa Cruises boosted the numbers of embarking/disembarking passengers which reach the port of Taranto also with cruise&fly packages.

The final outcome of such consistent effort is that Taranto can present itself to the international audience as an **excellent cruise destination**.

# At the heart of HISTORY

*The cultural heritage of the only colony of Sparta in the Mediterranean*



Taranto, known as “*the city of two seas*,” sits in a strategic position between the Mar Grande (Great Sea) and the Mar Piccolo (Small Sea). This location has put it at the heart of important historical events.

An important colony of **Magna Graecia**, Taranto reveals its stratified history through its many layers. Below the streets, hypogea, necropolises, crypts and chamber tombs tell of an ancient and refined cult of the dead, as well as of an aristocracy that knew how to capture the essence of life. The city’s most valuable ancient artefacts are showcased in the [National Archaeological Museum](#). Here, you can admire the renowned “Ori di Taranto” (Taranto’s golden treasure), a series of refined gold pieces produced locally between the 4th and 2nd centuries BC, as well as a collection of archaeological finds from across the Ionian province.

The history of Taranto runs along the two bridges that connect the old city to the new part of town. The Ponte Girevole (**swing bridge**), which opened in 1887 is a marvel of mechanical engineering, leads straight into the maze of narrow alleyways that branch off the central Via Cava, itself lined with small craft shops.

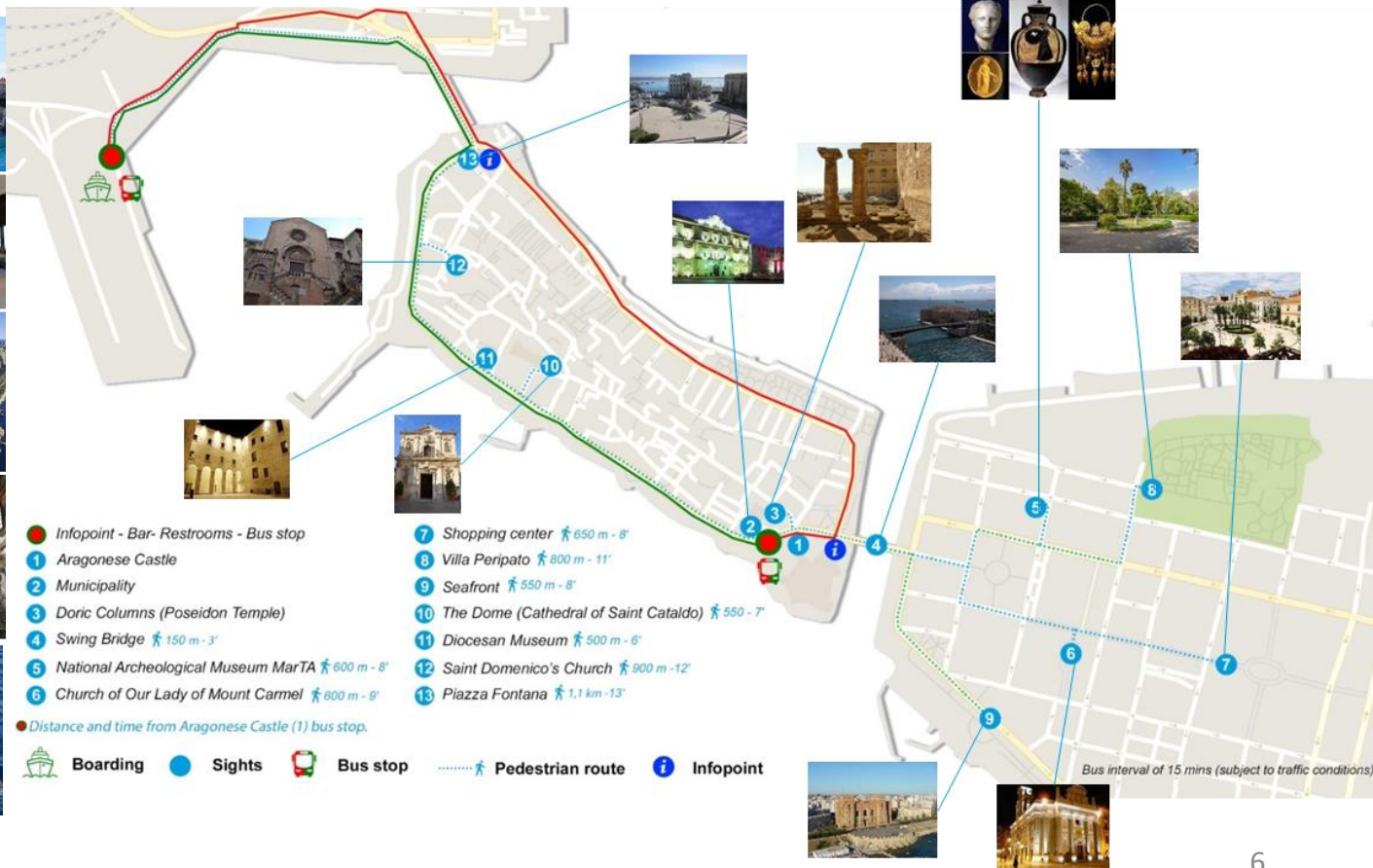
Noble architecture and churches in various styles and from different periods stand on this isthmus of land. Notable examples include **St Cataldo Cathedral**, with its combination of Romanesque and Baroque styles, and **St Domenico Church**, with its Gothic features.

## 706 B.C.

*Taranto was founded almost 3000 years ago and is one of the oldest cities in Italy*

# Taranto Old Town

At the heart of  
HISTORY





# Taranto Old Town

At the heart of

HISTORY



## National Archaeological Museum of Taranto - MarTA

As the ancient capital of Magna Graecia, Taranto houses one of the most important archaeological museums, the [National Archaeological Museum of Taranto](#), also called the MarTA, boasting one of the most important archaeological collections in the South of Italy. The MarTA is a treasure trove of items that speak of the Ionian city's past and recount the history of Taranto and its surrounding territory. Some of these objects are particularly significant and entice visitors to stop for an insightful look at the heritage of Taranto. The main attraction of the museum is the impressive collection of ancient gold jewellery, the most extensive in all of Italy.



## The Old Town of Taranto

Founded about **2.700 years ago**, Taranto, the only **Spartan colony** in Italy, boasts a unique cultural heritage that shines through every corner and every alleyway of its maze of streets. Lying on an island and connected to the mainland by two bridges, the Old Town is the beating heart of the ancient city with many stories to tell. Filled with historical landmarks, the Old Town of Taranto can be easily visited on foot or using low-impact, sustainable means of transportation. From the [Doric Columns](#) of the ancient temple (probably dedicated to Aphrodite) to the Renaissance era Aragonese Castle, there are centuries of history to marvel at. The **Cathedral of San Cataldo** – the oldest cathedral in Puglia, the **Diocesan Museum**, the ancient underground hypogeums are all within easy reach.



## The Aragonese Castle

Overlooking the Ionian sea, Taranto's famous **Renaissance ancient fortress**, the [Aragonese Castle](#), was built in the 15th century by the King of Naples Ferdinand of Aragona. Throughout the centuries the Castle had different uses. In 1799 General Thomas Alexandre Davy de La Pailleterie, also known as **General Dumas**, the father of celebrated author Alexandre Dumas, was kept prisoner in the Aragonese Castle in Taranto. Today the Castle is an archaeologically relevant site and at the same time a cultural venue, where events and exhibitions are held.

# Taranto Old Town

At the heart of  
HISTORY



## Taranto, the ancient cradle of Magna Graecia

Culturally lively with its theatres, temples and schools, wealthy thanks to agricultural production and trade exchanges with the Greek homeland, Taranto (then called Taras) was known as the capital of **Magna Graecia**. The massive **Doric columns** are the remains of a temple facing the sea, dedicated to a feminine deity, probably Aphrodite.

As in many cities in the Magna Graecia, the great **Goddess Persephone** was worshipped also in Taranto. A great statue depicting the Goddess can be admired in the Archaeological Museum.

## Sparta and Taranto, mother and daughter

Taranto was founded in 706 BC by a young Spartan warrior named **FALANTO**, the only colony far from the homeland. Before leaving, Falanto was told the following words by the Delphi Oracle: "**When you see rain from the clear sky, you will overtake territory and city.**" During the voyage, his ship was wrecked. Falanto was rescued by a **dolphin**, hence the symbol of the city, and led to shore. Falanto, exhausted, fell asleep on the knees of his wife Etra, who started crying. Falanto, whose face was wet with the tears of Etra (clear sky), understood the sense of that prophecy that until then seemed like a puzzling enigma. Thus, after having landed on the East coast at Saturo, the Spartans moved westward to found the ancient **TARAS**.

## Ikkos and the Athlete from Taranto

Athletics were an important part in the cultural life of Ancient Greeks, connected to loyalty and respect: even today we associate sports to such values. One of the greatest athletes of that time was born in Taranto: his name was **IKKOS**. He was a sportsman as well as the father of athletic dietology.

In 1959 archaeological excavations discovered the tomb of an ancient Greek man and his remains immediately revealed that he used to be a skilled athlete who won the Panathenaic Games, similar to today's Olympic Games, that took place in Athens. The grave goods as well as the skeleton of the so-called "**athlete from Taranto**" are now exhibited at the National Archaeological Museum.



# Taranto Old Town

At the heart of  
HISTORY



## Underground archaeological sites

An important colony of Magna Graecia, Taranto reveals its stratified history through its many layers. Below the street level, **hypogea, necropolises, crypts and chamber** tombs tell of an ancient and refined cult of the dead, as well as of an aristocracy that knew how to capture the essence of life. Located in via Cava, in the heart of the Old Town, the fascinating underground oil mill was built in the X Century and tells of the Apulian practice of producing oil in rooms carved into the rock.



## St Cataldo's, the oldest Cathedral in Puglia

The [Cathedral of St. Cataldo](#), built in the **10<sup>th</sup> Century**, is the oldest Cathedral in Puglia. Inside the Cathedral different architecture styles are blended together: the **large baroque chapel** of St. Cataldo features the stunning marble statues representing St. Giuseppe with The Child and St. Giovanni Gualberto, both by Sammartino. The chapel has an elliptical plan and it is finely decorated with marble inlays, glass beads, mother-of-pearl and lapis lazuli. It also hosts an important set of statues (six of them are, again, by Sammartino). Inside the altar there are the mortal remains of St. Cataldo, discovered near the Baptistery in 1071. Underneath the major altar there is the **crypt**, dated back to the X century and decorated with frescoes of various eras.



## The Swing Bridge

The Swing Bridge of Taranto, which is about eighty-nine meters long (292 feet), ten wide (33 feet) and twelve high (39 feet), is undoubtedly one of the most valuable engineering works that were built in Taranto between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and, over time, it has become **one of the most iconic images of the "City of the Two Seas"**.

The first single-span structure was inaugurated in 1887 with the dedication to San Francesco di Paola. In **1957**, the bridge needed to be replaced with a new structure, very similar to the previous one, but operated by an electric mechanism which was inaugurated by the President Giovanni Gronchi on 10 March 1958.

# In the depths of the SEA

*Getting up-close and personal with  
dolphins*



Thanks to its unique geo-morphological and chemical-physical characteristics the Gulf of Taranto represents the ideal habitat for many **species of cetaceans**. In general, in the Mediterranean Sea, there are 12 species of cetaceans belonging to the suborders of the Baleen Whales and Toothed Whales. The percentage of sighting of the various species in the Gulf of Taranto area is divided as follows: 59% Striped dolphins, 25% Bottlenose dolphins, 10% Risso's dolphins, 5% Sperm whale, 1% Common dolphin.

The scientific research association [Jonian Dolphin Conservation](#) organizes **dolphin watching experiences** at sea for visitors and tourists. Their broader project called citizen science is geared towards promoting activities of environmental education emphasizing the importance of the conservation of the marine heritage of the Jonian coasts.

## 5 species of cetaceans

*The Gulf of Taranto is home to a bustling sea life,  
among which 5 different species of cetaceans*

# Surrounded by NATURE

*Unspoilt beauty of natural canyons*



**200** meters

*It is the depth of the ravine of Laterza, the second deepest canyon in Europe*



# Surrounded by NATURE



## “Terra delle Gravine” Regional Park

Spread over 12 municipalities of the Taranto province and one municipality of Brindisi province for a total of 28.000 ha, the “**Terra delle Gravine** (Land of the ravines)” Regional Park is characterized by the so-called “gravine”, gorges of karst origin, formed by water erosion of streams that gush out from the Murge Upland and flow into the sea.

At about 30 km from Taranto (40 minutes drive) the largest Park in Puglia welcomes visitors to its landscape made of **cave houses, crypts and sanctuaries**.

The caves nestled along the ravines have been inhabited throughout the centuries from the Neolithic Age up to the 50's, with a peak in intensity during the Middle Ages.

Ravines are the ideal environment for climbers, but also for anyone who enjoys a good trek.



## Archaeology and art in the gravine

Since the Neolithic age, people have made homes out of the caves in the gravine, finding shelter and a stable climate. Today these ancient villages and their richly decorated **rock churches** are real gems of the natural and cultural Apulian heritage.

Guided trekking trails in Parco delle Gravine will allow passengers to discover the hidden beauty of places such as the ravine of San Marco and Madonna della Scala Church near [Massafra](#) (at about 16 km from Taranto, 15 minutes by car), the Bona Nova sanctuary with its splendid frescoes and cave art. The tour will bring visitors to the pharmacy of the magician Greguro, with hundreds of small niches especially carved in the rock and used as shelves for potions and medicinal herbs.



## Guided itineraries in unspoilt landscape

Reconnecting with nature and reestablishing a respectful relationship with the environment is key to living in accordance with natural rhythms.

The project “**Cicale di Puglia**” aims at encouraging the renovation of the relationship between man and nature by creating a **sustainable tourism experience**, focusing on off-the-beaten-track experiences that promote the areas of the countryside.

Guided tours in the areas around Taranto, in the unspoilt landscape of the province, will allow passengers to live an authentic experience in extraordinary areas rich with natural, cultural, artistic heritage and food traditions.

# Diving in CRYSTAL-CLEAR waters

*The Ionian coastline features a wealth of gorgeous beaches*



Puglia boasts a 540 miles (860 km) long sun-kissed coastline with golden beaches and crystal clear waters.

In year 2023 the Blue Flag certification was awarded to 4 beaches along the Jonian coast as well as the “Sails” certification, awarded by Legambiente and the Touring Club of Italy to the country’s most gorgeous beaches.

A portion of Jonian coastline near Maruggio is characterized by the presence of a series of sand dunes which belong to a protected area for their environmental importance as they allow the flourishing of various species of plants, known as the “Mediterranean maquis”.

## **4** certified Blue Flag beaches

*In the province of Taranto the Blue Flag certification was awarded to Leporano, Castellaneta, Ginosa and Maruggio in 2023*

# Breathing the charm of TRADITIONS

The **masserie** in the province of Taranto are ancient fortified farmhouses, dating back as far as the Seventeenth century. Usually, the masseria is surrounded by dry stone walls that identify the perimeter of the property, within which there are plots of farmlands or pastures. Today, many masseria farms still have the role of ancient products production and processing centers, and in many cases this activity is integrated with rural hospitality.

The food and wine culture of Taranto **orecchiette** (traditional ear shaped pasta), mozzarella (a kind of soft cheese) and Apulian bread during select workshops.

The **Itria Valley**, extending over an area including the beautiful towns of Alberobello, Locorotondo, Martina Franca, Ceglie Messapica, Cisternino and Fasano, is an extensive karst depression featuring vineyards and dry stone walls. Many small towns in the Itria Valley are the so called “borghi”, that is characteristic small villages with preserved historic centre.

The Valley is dotted with thousands of trulli, small limestone dwellings with cone shaped roofs, held together without mortar.



## 154 «masserie»

*It is the number of «masserie (fortified farmhouses)» near Martina Franca, the largest town in the Itria Valley*



# Breathing the charm of TRADITIONS



## Pizzica – traditional folk dance

What's behind these involving rhythms, stirring our hidden dancing awareness? The origin of tarantella is linked to the presence of a spider in the countryside near Taranto... but nowadays this folk dance originates from the lively harmony of the Apulian musical soul.

Guests can take discover local music and popular dance with expert dancers, who will explain the origins of Apulian **pizzica** and **tarantella**.



## The pottery of Grottaglie

Tucked away in Puglia, **Grottaglie** is a small gem at about 16 km from Taranto. Guests will be charmed and artistically involved in this village with earthenware laden roofs and pottery workshops, as Grottaglie boasts an **ancient tradition of ceramic art**.

During the tour an expert artisan will guide visitors in the creative process of making a vase with a treadle wheel.



## The Itria valley and Martina Franca

The Itria Valley, an **extensive karst depression**, includes the beautiful towns of Alberobello, Locorotondo, Martina Franca, Ceglie Messapica, Cisternino and Fasano, the so called “borghi” that is characteristic **small whitewashed villages** with preserved historic centre. The Valley is dotted with thousands of **trulli**, small limestone dwellings with cone shaped roofs, held together without mortar.

At about 30 km from Taranto in the heart of the Itria Valley lies the gem of **Martina Franca**, small town with **baroque style buildings** where strolling the streets means discovering astoundingly picturesque corners and quaint cafes and restaurants offering many ways to taste traditional food.

# Tasting the intensity of FLAVORS



Taranto is a land where the food and wine culture has ancient roots. Typical products express the excellent qualities of the soil and the sun of Puglia in their taste: The **clementine** of Taranto, the Manduria **cherry tomato**, extra-virgin olive oil, **bread** of Laterza and the Taranto **mussel**.

Among them the **Primitivo di Manduria** is a DOC (controlled designation of origin) wine, mainly produced in the provinces of Brindisi and Taranto.

Exquisite Primitivo is an ideal companion to complex dishes of the Mediterranean tradition: delivering intense aromas and pleasant flavors, this full-bodied and harmonic red features orange and lilac hues in its regularly aged range.

\*Denominazione di Origine Controllata e Garantita (DOCG) is the highest designation of quality among Italian wines. DOC (Denominazione di Origine Controllata) requires that a wine satisfy a defined quality standard, and be produced within the specified region.

**1** *DOCG wine\**

**7** *DOC wines\**

*are produced in the areas near Taranto*

# Tasting the intensity of FLAVORS



## Laterza Bread

In **Laterza**, an ancient city centre at about **60 km from Taranto**, the namesake bread has been produced for more than three centuries and is now protected by the "[Pane di Laterza](#)" quality brand.

With an intense cereal aroma and a slightly acidic flavour, Laterza Bread has a crunchy crust, which is about 3 cm thick and tends to be brown, with an ivory white honeycomb crumb. Passengers can discover how to bake Laterza bread by taking a cooking class in an ancient oven in Laterza.



## Primitivo wine

The **Primitivo di Manduria** is a **DOC** (controlled designation of origin) wine, mainly produced in the provinces of Brindisi and Taranto. The **Primitivo Dolce Naturale** is the sweet-flavored variety and is a **DOCG** (controlled and guaranteed designation of origin) wine.

The sweet Primitivo variety is intensely purple, with a persistent fruity and spicy scent. Its sweet flavor enhances a warm, smooth and robust body. The [Museum of the civilization of Primitivo wine](#), located in **Manduria**, about 50 km from Taranto, was born with a strong vocation for memory, that is, from the desire not to lose track of a cultural world that was living a profound transformation, and therefore at risk of oblivion. The exhibition brings adults and children closer to the heart of the Primitivo culture, from the cultivation of the vine to the production of wine, with an engaging journey to experience firsthand all the emotions associated with the magical world of wine. Wine tasting experiences are offered in the traditional masserie (ancient farmhouses) to discover how wine is produced and have a tasting experience.



## Extra-virgin olive oil tasting experience

The characteristic feature of Apulian landscape are vineyards and thousand-years-old olive groves. Today these products are one of Puglia's world known outstanding features.

In the **frantoi (olive mills)** passengers are walked through the different stages of oil production – from olives to the mill – and are able to taste different varieties of extravirgin olive oil, from the sweetest (Ogliarola) to the spiciest (Coratina).



# Tasting the intensity of FLAVORS



## Taranto Black Mussel

It's small, with a stumpy and rounded shape, tastes like nothing else. It's the Taranto mussel, the queen of Italian mussels, renowned for its rosy or deep yellow meat, fleshy, very tasty. With its "gardens" in the **Mar Piccolo and Mar Grande**, the city of Taranto is historically the site for their production.

It is claimed that they owe their special taste – delicate and sweet – to the presence of freshwater sources in the sea where they are farmed.

**High-quality mussel farming** is closely controlled to ensure a safe and healthy product.

Sea food and mussels tastings can represent a wonderful sensory experience for food lovers as well as a significant contact with the local cultural heritage.



## Capocollo

Puglia's **best cured meats** have traditionally come from **Martina Franca**, and in the past, workers from around the town were always hired in the Taranto and Salento areas to help during the pig-butchering season. This town, in the Itria area, is home to some pork specialties still made using traditional techniques and, wherever possible, locally farmed ingredients. Among the most celebrated is capocollo or capicollo, the name used in southern Italy for cured pork neck.



## Orecchiette cooking class

As a **symbol of Puglia**, orecchiette are a pillar of the regional culinary tradition. Strictly hand made and concave shaped so as to better gather sauce. Their name comes from the Italian word for "ear", and they are usually served with turnip greens, cauliflowers, broccoli and other vegetables, or with meat sauce. Their particular shape eases drying and storage, so as to preserve pasta for long periods of time, especially during food shortage periods, or to store huge quantities of orecchiette on ships for long haul travels. Passengers can learn how to perfectly shape this kind of pasta following the traditional recipe using few and simple ingredients and tools: water, semolina, a cutting board and a knife. The **secrets of perfect orecchiette** will be disclosed with patience and much love.



## Cheese making in the Itria valley

Among the best internationally acclaimed traditional food in the Itria valley there are cheese products. At the heart of dairy farms, visitors will be walked through the process of typical farm cheese production to know how the juiciest **mozzarella**, **burrata** and traditional **straciatella** are made.

# UNESCO World Heritage Sites

## *Matera and Alberobello*

Taranto is located at a short distance from two of the most charming UNESCO World Heritage sites in Italy, Matera and Alberobello.

About an hour's drive away from Taranto lies the city of **Matera**, famous for its extensive cave-dwelling districts, the sassi. In 1993 the town was made a UNESCO World Heritage site, for being "the most outstanding, intact example of a troglodyte settlement in the Mediterranean region, perfectly adapted to its terrain and ecosystem". And ever since, Matera has become steadily more popular as an off-the-beaten-track tourist destination.

**Alberobello** is a small and quaint town about half a hour far from Taranto which has made itself known all over the world for the famous "trulli" houses. Although the typical settlement with cone-shaped roof of the trulli can be found all over the area of the "Valle d'Itria", it is in Alberobello that you can find the largest group, dating back as far as the 14<sup>th</sup> century.



**1500** *is the number of trulli in Alberobello*

# UNESCO World Heritage Sites

## *Matera and Alberobello*



## Matera, one of the oldest cities in the world

About an hour's drive away from Taranto lies Matera, one of the oldest cities in the world, where nature, history and culture come together. The “**city of Sassi**” (meaning cave houses) is a magical place that preserves evidence of human settlements since the Paleolithic period in its natural caves carved into the rock. When visiting Matera you feel as if you are entering a nativity scene. Houses, churches, monasteries and hermitages are built in the natural caves of the Murgia in a landscape so evocative that it was chosen as the setting for films such as Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* and Pier Paolo Pasolini's *The Gospel according to St Matthew*. Declared a **UNESCO World Heritage site** in 1993, Matera became the **European Cultural Capital for the year 2019**.



## Alberobello, picturesque trulli town

In the heart of the **Itria Valley** at about 30 minutes from Taranto lies Alberobello, a small and quaint town about half a hour far from Taranto which has made itself known all over the world for the famous “trulli” houses – the cone-shaped dwellings that used to be home to the farmers. In Alberobello you can find the largest group of trulli, about 1500, dating back as far as the **14th century**.



# FLY & CRUISE

Plenty good reasons for staying

**213** accomodation

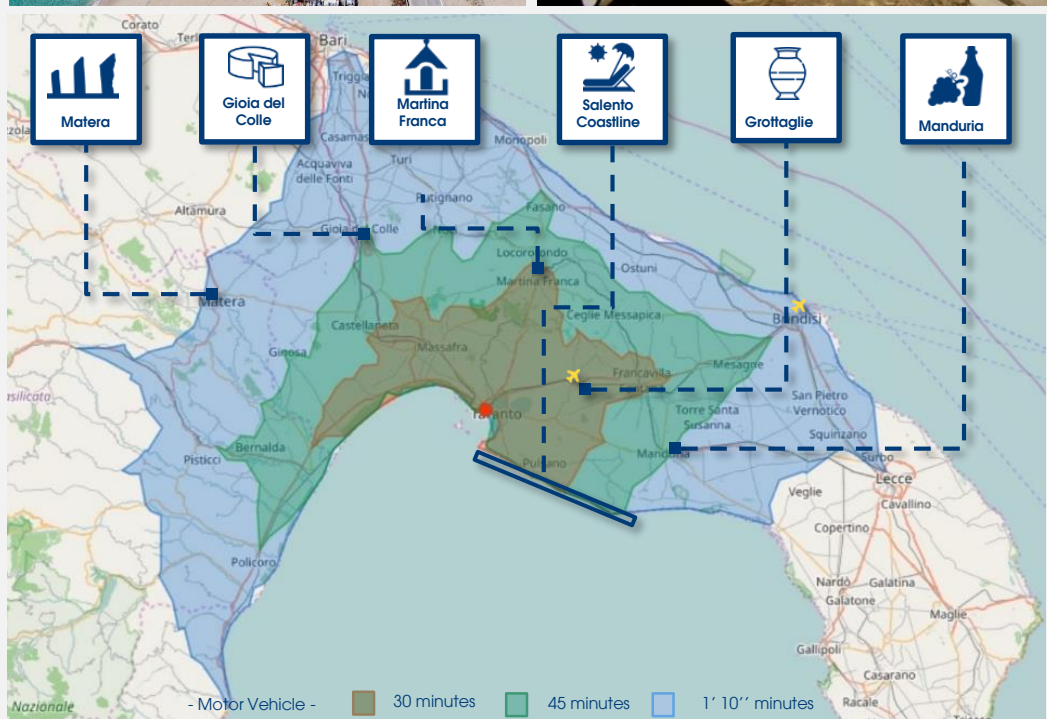
facilities in Taranto

**3524** total beds

The port of Taranto is conveniently connected to the main airports in the Region, Grottaglie (16 km) Brindisi (75 km) and Bari (90 km). The Taranto-Grottaglie airport is the main strength for reversing the trend and building brand new “Fly&Cruise” itineraries in the **Med**: thanks to the launch of a charter service connecting the main International airports to Taranto a new synergy between port and airport will be set as well as a first-hand milestone for the cruise industry in the Med area.

Cruising Taranto may cause *infinite happiness, unlimited fun and a true pleasure for the eyes!*

Taranto will take travelers to a fairy-tale scenery, extremely rich in history, stunning coastal landscapes and fabulous food.



# Taranto Cruise Port

*The key success factor  
for the development of cruise tourism*

Efficient port services



Meet and greet services



In April 2021, The Port Network Authority of the Ionian Sea has granted a concession to the **Taranto Cruise Port (TCP)** - controlled by **Global Ports Holding Plc**, the largest independent cruise terminal operator globally – for implementing support services to cruise passengers in the port of Taranto. **For the next 20 years**, the TCP will run a portion of state-owned maritime areas and facilities located on the **St. Cataldo Pier, in the Port of Taranto**.

The collaboration with the TCP is a key factor in the success of the promotional strategy of the PNAIS as they offer supporting services to cruise passengers transiting in the port of Taranto as well as to all those who choose the Ionian port as a port of embarkation and disembarkation.

Extensive parking area  
for Shuttle Services



# Unprecedented growth in CRUISE TRAFFIC 2021-2022 and 2023 forecast



Following the unprecedented growth in 2021 which made the port of Taranto enter the top 20 ports in Italy at the 12<sup>th</sup> place, in 2022 the port welcomed 9 different cruise lines and 54 calls - hitting the record number of 108.810 passengers.

The cruise port of Taranto is expected to welcome more international passengers in 2023, with 7 different cruise lines and more than 120.000 passengers expected.



**YEAR 2023**  
*(forecast)*

About **140.000**  
**PASSENGERS**

**YEAR 2022**

**108.810**  
**PASSENGERS**

**YEAR 2021**

**80.309**  
**PASSENGERS**



**38 CRUISE CALLS**  
**7 Cruise Lines**

**54 CRUISE CALLS**  
**9 Cruise Lines**

**28 CRUISE CALLS**  
**1 Cruise Line**



More than **67.000**  
**PAX** embarking and  
disembarking

**19.073**  
**PAX** embarking and  
disembarking

**16.177**  
**PAX** embarking and  
disembarking



## Engaging the stakeholder community

The promotional strategy of cruise destination Taranto carried out by PNAIS is coupled with an intense internal dialogue to stimulate the cruise community by engaging with the stakeholders – both public and private, embodied by the Harbor Master, the Municipality, the transport system, and the local attractions.

Stakeholder meetings are held regularly to coordinate activities between associations and public bodies to ensure that the cruise passengers receive the best welcome ever. The most fruitful collaborations involve the Municipality and the Harbor Master as primary actors working in full synergy with the PNAIS and TCP.

In 2022 this action was further strengthened with the creation of a dedicated working group to exchange information and ideas to facilitate the development and consolidation of cruise tourism, with the objective of sustainable growth.



The Port Network Authority has agreements:

with the **Municipality of Taranto** aiming at a Collaborative Governance for the Programming and Redesigning of the Interventions Concerning the Regeneration of those Areas connecting the Port to the City

with the **National Archaeological Museum of Taranto** for the promotion of actions aimed at encouraging tourism connected to cultural heritage

with the **Regional Tourism Promotion agency PugliaPromozione** to promote actions aimed at the enhancement of cruise tourism

# Increased popularity of cruise destination Taranto



The most striking figures for 2021 are as follows:

- **67** buses departing from the port in a single day
- **1032** passengers embarking/disembarking in a single day



Guests can treat themselves to a beach day on the famed **Salento coastline**, featuring **crystal blue water** and white sand, dotted by lavender and the typical “Mediterranean shrub”.



Tasting Mediterranean flavors and fish based specialties is a must in the small restaurants in the **Old Town** of Taranto. Tours to the nearby villages centuries-old olive groves and vineyards allow to discover how extra virgin **olive oil** and delicious **DOC (Controlled Designation of Origin)** and IGT (Typical Geographical Indication) **wines** like Primitivo and Negramaro are made.



You will feel like travelling in time while walking around the Ionian city, from its Spartan origins **3000 years** ago, to the Renaissance. Just a hour's drive from Taranto, discover one of the most ancient cities in the world, **Matera**, where ancient cave houses are now being renovated and made into fancy boutique hotels.



Guests can discover how artisans still craft beautifully decorated **vases**, dishes and lamps in **Grottaglie**. This century old art is still alive in the village where a handful of workshops are open to visitors and display colorful creations.



There's plenty of fish in the sea, especially in Taranto! Well not fish but actually cetaceans. Guests taking **boat tours** are able to spot **dolphins** in the gulf of Taranto. For **trekking** lovers, the gravine (ravines) of the **Itria valley** are the place to go.

# Cruise Season Closing Ceremony

*Spectacular «salute» to cruise passengers leaving the rock port of Taranto*

With the objective to celebrate the end of a successful year, the PNAIS launched the **Cruise Season Closing ceremony event**, organized in collaboration with the Municipality and the Puglia Region.

The departure of the last cruise ship is accompanied by an amazing choreography of colored lights, water fountains, and fire, in synch with an electrifying rock soundtrack, for the entertainment of the cruise passengers and crew.

The event reinforces the **brand of Taranto as a 'rock port'** characterized by enthusiasm and welcoming spirit.

Watch the video here or click the QR Code: <https://youtu.be/7h-xnJySPE>



Lights, rock music, fire and water at the «Cruise Season Closing Ceremony» 2022 in the port of Taranto. Below the «Rock Port» logo





# Maiden calls 2023

## #welcometoTaranto

*cruise travelers*



The portfolio of the port of Taranto features a **variety** of cruise lines, reflecting the flexibility of cruise port infrastructure and the wide choice of shore excursions available in the destination.

The 2023 season sees passengers from seven different companies arriving in the port-city: **Costa Cruises, Marella Cruises, Celebrity Cruises, P&O Cruises, Sea Cloud, Noble Caledonia and Norwegian Cruise Line**. Embarking and disembarking passengers are provided with multiple services by the Taranto Cruise Port every Saturday with the scheduled calls of the refined Costa Pacifica from 3 June to 7 October, the closing date of the cruise season. *The growing range of cruise lines choosing to call at Taranto confirms the new normality: Taranto is becoming an increasingly popular cruise destination.*

The PNAIS with the aim to create an exceptional welcoming experience for cruise ships organized **special maiden calls ceremony** with the spectacular salutation with **water plays of the tugs**, and the traditional **plaque exchange** that included the gift of prestigious books about the cultural heritage in the Museums of Taranto.



# 5 maiden calls in 2023



Watch the video story of the Skuma Fam Trip [here](#) or click the QR Code

# Skuma Fam Trip

*getting to know what it's like to*  
**#cruiseTaranto**

With the aim to allow a first-hand experience of the cruise destination Taranto, the PNAIS designed and organized the **Skuma Familiarization Trip** (7-12 April 2022) specifically targeting the international cruise industry professionals.

The name of the educational tour conveys the bond between the port-city of Taranto and the sea recalling “**Skuma**” **the mermaid**, portrayed by sculptor Francesco Trani in his artwork placed on the cliff of the Harbour Master’s Office Dock in Mar Grande and recently restored with the contribution of the Port Network Authority of the Ionian Sea.

**Cruise lines, tour operators, journalists and cruise bloggers** were engaged in a **four-day tailor made programme** built around guided tours, experiences and events to present Taranto as a cruise port of excellence.



Competitive factors of the cruise destination Taranto include **state-of-the-art infrastructure**, including the recently launched East Side of the San Cataldo Pier overlooking the city and complementing the berth offer dedicated to small, medium and large-sized ships, and the **strong synergy with the Taranto Cruise Port**.

Relying on final impressions, the operators showed great interest in the cruise port and in the range of cultural, artistic, naturalistic, experiential and - last but not least - food&wine offers of Taranto and the local area.

The participant cruise bloggers [Sensational Cruises](#) and [Liveboat](#) narrated the fam trip live on their Instagram and Facebook pages. The international magazine [Cruise and Ferry](#) produced an online article, which will be followed by a thorough piece in the Autumn/Winter issue detailing each tour involved.

Participants included Emilio Freeman, VP Itineraries and Destinations, SeaDream Yacht Club, Michele Bosco, Product Manager Shore Excursions, Mediterranean, North Africa & Black Sea, Holland America Group, Raffaella Del Vecchio, Shore and Ground Coordinator, Medov; John Ingleton, Executive Director, Cruise and Ferry; Rosalba Scarrone, Liveboat cruise blog; Giuseppe Virgilio, Sensational Cruises cruise blog.

# International EVENTS in 2023 and the future



**The port-city of Taranto** will be the hosting location for a number of international events in 2023 and in the upcoming years.

#### **Italy Sail Grand Prix** (23-24 September 2023)

The Sail GP is an action-packed international sailing competition where teams use high performance F50 foiling catamarans. The city of Taranto has already successfully hosted the event in 2021 offering a welcoming environment to international teams and proving that Taranto is the ideal location for global-scale events related to water sports.

#### **Italian Cruise Day** (27 October 2023)

The Italian Cruise Day, conceived and organized by the Italian company Risposte Turismo, is the most important event for the Italian cruise industry, gathering top-level professionals for conferences and networking moments (see next slide).

#### ***The 20<sup>o</sup> edition of the Mediterranean Games (2026)***

The Mediterranean Games are a multi-sport event, organized on the model of the Olympic Games, held among athletes from nations bordering the Mediterranean Sea. Taranto will welcome thousands of sportsmen from all over the Mediterranean and unite people from various countries celebrating the value of cooperation beyond borders.



**TARANTO 2026**  
XX GIOCHI DEL MEDITERRANEO





# Towards Italian Cruise Day 2023

The [Italian Cruise Day](#) - conceived and promoted by Risposte Turismo - has represented, for many years now, the Home of Italian Cruise Ports and is a prestigious international showcase dedicated to promoting Italian cruise tourism, by organising meetings and discussions between the main players in the new landscape of cruise tourism in Italy. During the latest edition held in Savona in October 2021 **Taranto was announced as the location for the next edition of the Italian Cruise Day**, an event which, in 2023, will represent a significant opportunity for international recognition and relaunch for the entire Ionian port city and which will see the Port Network Authority working with the Municipal Administration to ensure the success of the initiative.



The Italian Cruise Day initiative was presented to the local operators and the press last January during the press conference attended by he the Puglia Region, Gianfranco Lopane, and the Taranto Municipality.

Thanks both to a precise strategy aimed at diversifying traffic and to the constant and profitable synergic collaboration with the Municipality of Taranto - finally the port of Taranto can present itself to the international audience of the cruise sector as a destination of excellence which is also attracting increasing interest from the main players in the cruise industry. Being able to host the next edition of the Italian Cruise Days in Taranto will allow the city to further enhance its image and the many attractions that make it a **unique destination in the Med area**.

# SEE YOU IN TARANTO



Port Network Authority  
of the Ionian Sea

Port of Taranto

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