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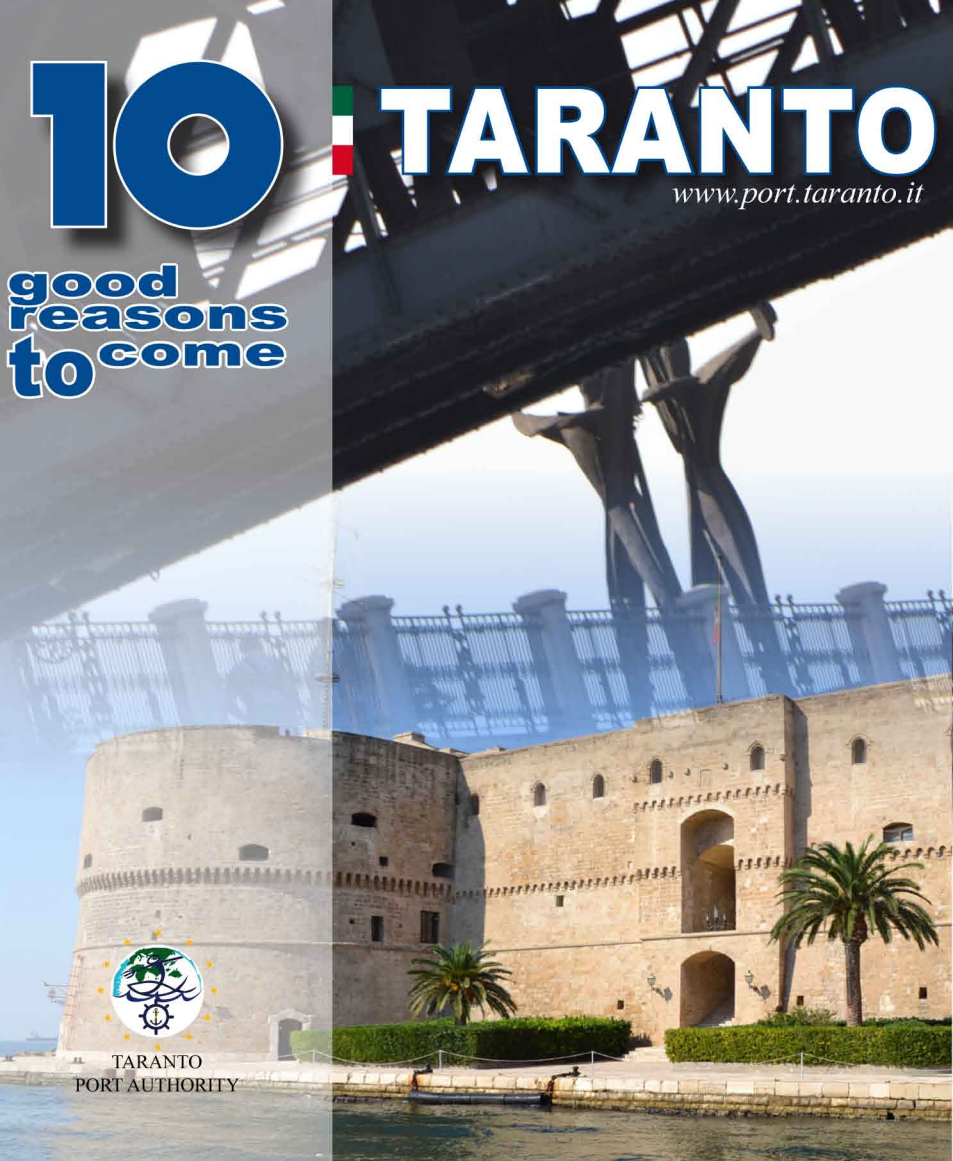
TARANTO

www.port.taranto.it

good
reasons
to come



TARANTO
PORT AUTHORITY



The old city of Taranto

Lying on an island at the meeting point of two seas (the open sea, Mar Grande, and a wide inlet bay, Mar Piccolo) the Old City of Taranto is one of the hidden gems of the South of Italy with a maze of narrow streets and tall buildings. A rotating bridge and a stone bridge connect the city to the mainland. In the Old City most of the main attractions, exciting and evocative places, are all within a walking distance of each other: the Aragonese Castle; the famous swing bridge - which rotates and opens in the middle to allow ships to pass through; the two magnificent columns (once part of a temple dedicated to the God Poseidon) which provide a constant reminder that Taranto was once a Greek colony.

Many churches and cathedrals witness the centrality of religion in the life of the city. One of the oldest is S. Domenico Maggiore, the church from where on Holy Thursdays the procession of Our Lady of Sorrows (L'Addolorata) sets out. The heartfelt rite has been celebrated since the 17th century. Thereabouts stands the Cathedral of Taranto, which has been remodelled over the centuries and now has a Baroque façade, it is dedicated to Saint Cataldo, the patron of the city. Restaurants and small fish markets bustle with life in the beautiful ancient Piazza Fontana, where an 18th century clock tower and old buildings surround the central fountain.

www.comune.taranto.it

The Aragonese Castle

Overlooking the Jonian sea, Taranto's famous Aragonese Castle dates back to the end of the 15th century. It was built on the site of a previous norman-swabian-angevin fortification, by the King of Naples of Aragona, in the shape of a kite with five round towers at the corners of the fortress. One of the towers was demolished in 1884 to make way for a new bridge.

One of the most famous places in the castle is the Chapel of St. Leonardo where the marriage of Countess Marie D'Enghien and King of Naples Ladislao I d'Angiò The Magnanimous was celebrated.

The Castle was later used as a jail and then as a Navy barracks.

Today, there are guided tours of the Castle every day and also many events and exhibitions going on throughout the year.

The Castle will feature in a new movie by Paul Haggis, also starring Adrien Brody, Olivia Wilde and Liam Neeson.

www.castelloaragonesetaranto.it

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The Archaeological Museum of Taranto - MARTA

The archaeological Museum was founded by Royal Decree in 1887, when one of the most celebrated Italian archaeologists Luigi Viola was the Head of excavations in Taranto. Taranto itself is the main theme of the museum. Visitors can explore different aspects of the ancient settlement such as the evolution of the city, intercultural relationships and the role of religion. In the museum, there are exhibits which cover a wide chronology (prehistoric and proto-historic periods, Greek Period, Roman Period, until the Middle Ages). When entering the museum, the visitor is immediately welcomed by the thoughtful glance of the Herakles by Lysippus. On the first and second floor, exhibits from the Greek Period are displayed, including the sarcophagus of the athlete discovered in 1959, tools used by athletes in competitions, and vases. The rooms dedicated to the Age of the Roman Empire abound with fascinating statues, rich furnishings and colourful mosaic floors. However, the main attraction of the museum is the “Room of Gold” which houses the most impressive collections of ancient gold jewellery in all of Italy. An incredible display of beautiful bracelets, elegant earrings and precious artefacts shows the evolution of the “gold-work” in the city between the 4th and 3rd centuries BC.



www.museotaranto.org

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The pottery of Grottaglie

The small city of Grottaglie just outside Taranto is famous for its beautiful ceramics and pottery workshops. In fact, you can say that Grottaglie is at the heart of the most important ceramic producing district of Italy. Strolling along “Potter’s Row” which takes up most of the city center, people can choose from a variety of different ceramics shops. There is also a ceramics museum which explores the history of ceramic works of art. During the 17th century Grottaglie’s ceramics industry focused on the production of floor and roof tiles, but then in the 18th century ceramists moved on to higher-end ceramic art such as decorative plates and figurines. The potters used a variety of hues that were completely different from anything used before – such as yellow and green and blue.

Furthermore, thanks to the advent of glazing, the colours lasted and the pottery didn’t break, therefore Grottaglie soon became very famous for its beautiful ceramics. There is a ceramic school where students learn the technique required to create this unique type of art. But if you don’t want to dedicate many years of your life learning ceramics, you can take a course in ceramics in one of Grottaglie’s many pottery shops.



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Olive oil and wine trails and tours

Apulia is literally full to the brim of vineyards and wineries. There are many trails and roads throughout the wine producing regions where visitors can go on tours and see the wine being produced while also having the opportunity to taste and savour some world class wines.

As well as the magnificent wines that Apulia produces, the Region also boasts some of the finest olive oils in the world. Visitors can also take tours of the olive groves and oil mills and see the process involved in producing the oil having the chance to savour the produce.

Every trail include the possibility to visit wine and oil museums, wine bars and guest houses which accomodate tourists from all over the world.

www.tipicipuglia.it



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100 Farm estates and the Green Road

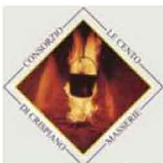
In the province of Taranto there are 100 farm estates, many of which offer a unique chance for visitors to enjoy the experience of staying at one of these beautiful residences and also savour the wonderful food and wine that they produce.

In addition, they provide courses on how to prepare traditional Apulian cuisine for tourists, both international and national. Furthermore, they also stage many events and festivals throughout the year.

The *Green Road Project* leads the visitor to discover the localities from Crispiano to Grottaglie through various tours, each of them exploring a different aspect of the area - religion, gastronomy and archaeology.

www.centomasserie.it

www.greenroad.it



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The Valley of Itria

www.valleditria.info

The Itria Valley is located in the heart of Apulia less than 30 km from the city of Taranto. It is an extensive karst depression at the bottom of the Murge, which is the most significant highland area in Apulia. The Valley which includes the towns of Alberobello, Locorotondo, Martina Franca, Ceglie Messapica, Cisternino and Fasano is characterized by the presence of numerous caves including the famous Grotte di Castellana. The whole area is a blend of rolling hills intertwined with fertile valleys and it is divided into small plots bordered by the typical dry stone walls built with rocks that in ancient times have been mined from the land to make way for pastures and crops. Ancient olive groves, (fine extra virgin olive oil is produced in the valley), stretches of forest and Mediterranean scrub alternate with numerous vineyards, where a white wine of excellent quality is produced. The valley is famous for its thousands of *Trulli* Houses, small limestone dwellings with cone shaped roofs, held together without mortar. Originally *Trulli* were temporary shelters for shepherds and farm tools; they eventually became permanent residences for farmers. Today most of them are being finely restored and transformed into luxury holiday houses and small charming hotels, One of the best examples of this type or architecture is Alberobello, a village entirely made up of Trulli.



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The gravine of the Jonian area

The National Park of the Gravine was established in 2005. It spreads over 13 municipalities in the province of Taranto (among which are Laterza, Castellaneta, Mottola, Massafra, Palagianò, Grottaglie, Martina Franca, etc.) and extends over an area of about 28.000 hectares.

Nowhere else in Europe visitors can enjoy such a concentration of natural beauty, archaeological sites, karst landscapes and historical stone settlements, in the same location. The “gravine” are deep rocky ravines which were once the bed of now extinct rivers. Their dips and heights allow the flourishing of extraordinarily rich natural habitats, featured by beautiful species of flowers (such as wild orchids) and the famous Mediterranean scrub. The ancient rocky settlements in Ginosa, Crispiano, Mottola, Laterza, Statte, Castellaneta, Massafra, Palagianello boast some beautiful religious architecture, such as churches and crypts carved in stone, which were often decorated with wonderful icons of the Virgin Mary, Jesus, Saints and Martyrs. The most stunning examples of these paintings on rock can be found in Massafra and Mottola.



www.parcogravine.it

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The Salento coastline

Taranto's coastline (which forms a significant part of the Salento Jonian coastline) is characterized by gorgeous beaches with soft white sand and crystal clear blue water and spectacular rocky and rugged foreshortenings with picturesque miniature cliffs scattered around.

The beaches along the Jonian coast are connected by a series of sand dunes which are protected by UNESCO as an areas of environmental importance.

The coastline also has something to offer to visitors interested in the military history of the area as there are a number of defence towers and fortifications at various places along the coast.



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The Sassi of Matera (Matera's secret caves)

About an hour's drive away from Taranto lies the ancient Cave city of Matera. The city is famous for its stone houses carved out of caves and cliffs. At first, the Sassi appear to be simple stone dwellings on a hill side with small passage ways running through them. However, walking among the houses you will see that they are actually caves dug into the cliff.

The Sassi are divided into two areas: Sasso Barisano and Sasso Caveoso.

The site was declared a UNESCO World Heritage, in 1993. Many of the caves and ancient buildings have been transformed into restaurants and *cave hotels* where visitors can stay and experience what it was like to live in the Sassi of Matera many centuries ago. The Sassi were made world-famous in 2005 when Mel Gibson's movie "The Passion" was shot there.

www.sassiweb.it





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