

Neverending space

The tour starts off in the Alta Murgia area called Parisi Vecchio (Eng. Old Parisi), a stunning authentic Murgian landscape. It is located on a gently sloping grooved ridge leading onto a high plain, west of Altamura, that originated from floodings.

On the Northern side of the sinkhole "Pulicchio of Altamura" driving along the Provincial road 35, there is a karst lake known as San Giuseppe's (Eng. St. Joseph) completely immersed in a thicket of white poplars and pubescent oaks. The lake is a karst depression that works as a permanent water collection basin as its karst fissures covered by clay, mud and rock fragments do not allow water to drain through.

From there we will walk on to the sinkhole "Pulicchio" towards the western border of the high plain. The ellipse shaped hole has a diameter of 400 m and a depth of about 100 m. A conifer wood covers the area all around it and is the result of the reforestation programme carried out since 1950.

We will have a chance to stop over at a local agritourist masseria for lunch and soon after go for a walk towards Murgia Ferrata. Alternatively, we suggest having a packed lunch in the oak wood "Bosco Scoparella", which is the only protected woodland area on the Adriatic side of the Murgia high plains. Oak species growing here are pubescent oaks and, in the moistest areas of the park, examples of elms and manna ashes among other species of coppice. Fauna protected species are rollers (Ital. ghiandaia marina - Lat. coracias garrulus), horned owls, golden orioles, woodlarks, butcherbirds, whitethroats, turtles, Kotschy's geckos, vipers, colubers and badgers.

Overview

Natural Environment: coppice woodland, pubescent oakland, scrubland, pastures, cropland, karst phenomena, natural Murgian habitat

Rural architecture: masserie, jazzi, dry-stone cone shaped huts or "trulli", dry-stone walls.

Specialities/Delicacies: Extra virgin Olive Oil "Terra di Bari" (Denomination of certified origin in Bitonto), Castel del Monte wine (Denomination of certified origin), chick peas, rapini pasta dishes, "burrata" soft cheese, "canestrato" seasoned cheese, "coratina" steak, handmade sasanello cake, bread of Altamura.

Starting point: Gravina in Puglia (recommended). Alternatively from any other towns in the park area.

Target: teenagers and adults;

Type of activity: guided tour - Difficulty: easy

Time: 8.30 am; Length of the tours: all day/half day (on demand)

Transport: 15 passenger seats mini-coach