



# *Giro d'Italia* PUGLIA *Tour of Italy*

## The Land

Located on the southeastern coast of Italy along the Adriatic Sea, the region of Puglia (or "Apulia" in English) makes up the "heel and spur" associated with lower Italy's distinctive boot shape. The land is diverse in its beauty as you will find crystal blue seas, green countryside, intense red terrain, golden sunsets and endless plains. Puglia has the country's longest coastline – 800km of it. Two seas meet here: the Adriatic to the east and the Ionian to the south. The land is exceptionally sun-soaked and dry, with a scarcity of fresh water. Apart from mountainous areas in the north and north west, Puglia is mostly a plain where farmers produce olives (and olive oil), grapes (and wine), cereals, almonds, figs, & tobacco.

## Facts

◇ It may be a sizeable region, but with Puglia never more than 30km across, you never find yourself far from the seaside, and that moderates the temperatures.

◇ In Puglia, and no where else, you will also find a very peculiar type of building - the trullo - a beehive-shaped, whitewashed, mortarless structure made of stone, usually used as barns in farming areas

## The Cuisine

The cuisine of Puglia was born as the cuisine of poverty. What this means is Pugliese pastas and breads are crafted from locally grown durum wheat and a diet rich in locally grown vegetables. Meat is not eaten often and beef, up until a few years ago, was almost unknown on Pugliese tables, with horsemeat being preferred.

Sauces embrace eggplant and fava beans, as well as wild game and fowl. Mussels and octopus from the Adriatic are prepared to a state of elegance only simplicity can produce. Wheat, grapes, olives, figs, turnips, almonds...all are ingredients grown in the region and, in the hands of Puglia's cooks, are transformed into dishes that warm the souls of food enthusiasts the world over.

Pugliese cuisine is based on olive oil, one of the great products of the region. In any given year, Puglia produces as much as two-thirds of all the olive oil in Italy, and while much of it is shipped north, more of it stays right here to be used in Pugliese kitchens. Cooks in Puglia even deep-fry with extra virgin oil, something that comes as a surprise to Americans but is routine in many parts of the Mediterranean