



Matera is an absolute must when visiting Southern Italy. Situated in Basilicata, this ancient town will have you feeling as though you have stepped back in time long before you're Grandmas' Grandmas' time.

Matera, as a town, has changed a lot since it was first inhabited an estimated 7000 years ago, however the Sassi (also known as old Matera), provides a spectacular taste of the rich history that dwells in this towns past. Matera Sassi is said to be the third-oldest town in the world that is still inhabited making it "one of the most spectacular landscapes in Italy".



1950's Matera was said to be the "shame of Italy", for the extremely poor living conditions causing disease to spread like wildfire and fatalities especially infant fatalities at record numbers. It was turned to a ghost town in this time when everyone was evacuated due to the unbearable, inhumane conditions. Now, only 7 decades on, Matera is labelled the 2019 European capital of culture, and is

buzzing most days of the year as tourists wander the streets in awe of this town captivated by the story of hardship that lives on through Sassi.



What to do.

The town Matera is quite large with various cafes, restaurants, schools and residential areas, the main attraction of Matera, however, is of course The Sassi.

There are many ways in which you can explore the Sassi. The most highly recommended way to see the sights is to just “get lost”. This ancient neighbourhood is like a beautiful, cobble stone maze, with many different staircases, alleyways and courtyards. You can simply wander around for hours admiring the quirky details such as pot-plants gardens, little trinket stalls and art and of course the unique, limestone buildings.

If “getting lost” isn’t for you, there are plenty of tours available. Tours are great if you prefer a more structured, informative experience, and are a wonderful way to meet new people who speak your language. Walking tours are offered in a range of different languages, and at varying prices depending on which you choose. Often the prices include tickets of the ticketed venues you will visit such as the Rocky Church and the Cave house (be sure to check the tour details to avoid any unwanted additional costs on the tour).

<https://www.getyourguide.com/sassi-di-matera-l89408/matera-2-hour-guided-tour-of-sassi-t261282/> – Is a highly recommended option, which does include those two tickets in the price.

If walking isn't for you, **Ape Calessino Tours** is a tour company which offers a 45-minute tour through the beautiful scenes of Sassi, transported in an authentic Italian Tuk-tuk.

For more information visit – <https://www.expedia.co.uk/things-to-do/ape-calessino-tour.a562716.activity-details>

Where to get the best view.

Just a 20-minute drive out of the city and around the gorge of Matera is Belvedere di Murgia Timone. Here you can park your car for free (plenty of space and easy access for campervans), and you can take a short walk out to the best viewpoint of Matera.

This view point offers a breathtaking, panoramic view of Sassi and the landscape in which this unique town dwells. Allow 1–2 hours to wander the mild hiking trail, take in the view and explore the mountainside. There are ancient caves that have been dug into the mountain if you follow the trail down the mountainside. Covered shoes are recommended if you plan to hike down to find the caves.

