



BRINDISI

ITALY

You might find yourself leaning on the rail of your ship, looking out over the city and harbor. If the time and light are just right, you may be surprised to hear yourself gently whispering “Filia solis ... filia solis.”

If you begin in the Eternal City of Rome and travel the entire 350 or so miles of the famed Via Appia (Appian Way), when you reach the very end you will be standing at the top of Virgil’s Staircase, next to the Colonna Romana (Roman Column) overlooking the beautiful harbor of the proud port city of Brindisi.

Mid way down the heel of the Italian boot, facing out towards the Adriatic Sea, it was just a few years ago that Brindisi was little more than a place for travelers and tourists to hop a ferry to Greece or Turkey. Barely anyone gave the city a second glance. Then the local government, business leaders and people of Brindisi moved the busy, downtown ferry docks and reclaimed the heart of the ancient city. Wide pedestrian-only boulevards, a new marina for sleek pleasure craft, cafés, restaurants, quaint shops and boutiques, all in the classic setting of an ancient harbor and city. In other words, you will feel welcome here, just as visitors and travelers have been for hundreds of years.

With a population hovering around 100,000 Brindisi is a hard working city. Work, food and family are probably the most important things in life here, though not necessarily in that order. The port is, as it has been for well over 2,000 years, the backbone of the city. There may be the occasional fancy yacht sailing into Brindisi, but cargo vessels, navy ships, and massive ferries keep the port humming. It has always been this way. Only the size of the ships has changed.

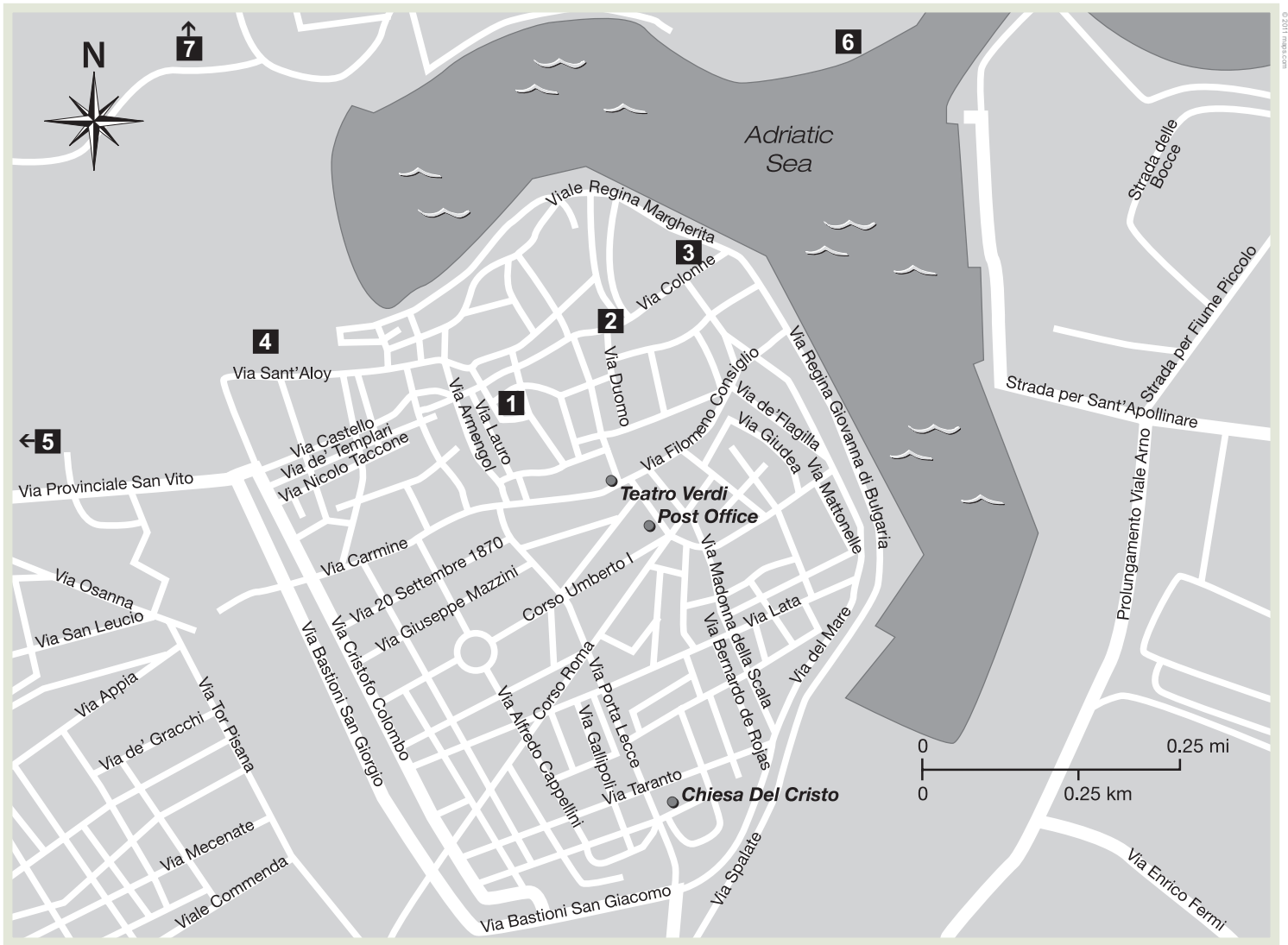
In 1228 the Holy Roman Emperor, Frederick II of Germany, was soon to be crowned King of Jerusalem. He was preparing to lead the 6th Crusade to the Holy Land and make war against the Muslim forces of Sultan Malik Al-Kamil. Dozens of ships filled with thousands of common soldiers, mounted knights and their war-horses were preparing to sail from this ancient Roman port of Brindisi. It may have been in the early morning just as the sun was coming up over the Adriatic Sea. Or it may have been in the late evening as the sun was setting towards the west, into the Gulf of Taranto. Frederick II stood on the deck of his ship and looked out over Brindisi as the waters of the harbor sparkled and the city turned aglow in the soft, warm light. “Brindisi, filia solis... whispered the mighty Emperor ... filia solis.” Brindisi ... “the daughter of the sun”.



HISTORY

Brindisi is tightly woven into the tapestry of history which spread over this region of the western Mediterranean. People have been living around this natural harbor at least as far back as 1500 BC. The Mycenaean merchants from the Greek Isles were here as were Illyrians tribes from the Balkans. Messapians soon followed and “Brentesion”, as the town was called, grew and joined the network of Mediterranean coastal towns which formed the land and sea trade routes connecting Europe to the Mid-East and beyond.

Emperors and empires, popes, potentates and pirates, invaders and infidels, even the barbarians all found good use for Brindisi. It was (and is) the harbor and its ease of access to the sea that made the city valuable. However, “value” implies price and for the people of Brindisi the price was often high. Prosperity was often followed by conquest. And that which was not destroyed by war was leveled by earthquake or laid low by famine or plague. It wasn’t that Brindisi was looking for a fight. The city, like so many others throughout history, simply got caught up in the storm of events which were swirling around it.



BRINDISI PLACES OF INTEREST

1 The **Temple of St. Giovanni** (St. John) is a beautiful example of classic Romanesque architecture. Wonderful frescos, though dimmed by time, continue to grace the walls of the church. Built by the Normans in the 11th century, the church was probably home to the Knights Templar.

2 The **Brindisi Cathedral** dates to the 12th century. The façade is the oldest part of the church and was built in the Apulian Romanesque style. Much of the church underwent extensive reconstruction in the mid-1700s following a devastating earthquake. A fragment of the original mosaic floor dating back to the 12th century is the oldest part of the church. Next to the cathedral is a small archeological museum, the Museo Archeologico Provinciale. The museum is home to an interesting collection of statues, coins and artifacts which date to the Roman Empire.

3 The **Roman Column** is believed to have been used by ancient sailors as a landmark as they entered the port of Brindisi. Before the 1528 earthquake two columns stood on this spot. Many are of the opinion that the columns marked the end of the famed Appian Way which connected Rome with the Empire's bustling port city of Brindisi. The original,

intricately carved marble capital of the column is on display at the nearby Palace Granafei-Nervegna.

4 The **Hohenstaufen Castle** is known by a number of names: Castello Svevo, The Grand Castle or The Swabian Castle. The castle was built upon the orders of German King Frederick II, the Holy Roman Emperor. Construction began in the 1200s. King Frederick and others used the port of Brindisi as a base of operations for the Roman Catholic Popes' Crusades against Muslims in Jerusalem and the Holy Land.

5 The **Tancredi Fountain** (Fontana Grande) was built in 1192 by the King of Sicily, Tancred of Lecce. The first fountain on this site was built by the Romans, one thousand years prior. The fountain was functional rather than ornamental. From here the people would draw the water they needed for daily use. Located at the entrance of the city, this fountain and the surrounding garden must have been a welcome site for travelers who reached Brindisi over the old Roman roads.

6 The **Aragonese Castle** was built in the late 1400s by Duke Alfonso di Calabria. The fort bolstered the defensive capabilities of the town. Over the following six centuries the fort has undergone a number of restoration projects.

7 The **Church of St. Maria del Casale** was built in the early 1300s as a gift from Phillipe d'Anjou and his wife Caterina de Valois. The style is transitional between the classic Romanesque and Gothic. The church has a number of beautiful Byzantine style frescoes. The cloister of the church is believed to be the site where, in 1310, a number of Knights Templar were tried by Pope Clemente V.

Beyond Brindisi

Alberobello is one of the charming towns in the beautiful countryside near Brindisi. The town is known for its many "Trulli" houses; circular, whitewashed and having conical shaped roofs.

Ostuni spreads out over a rolling hill along the famed Via Appia Traiana. This is a storybook town, gleaming white in the Italian sunshine. Narrow streets, ancient olive trees and a beautiful cathedral all combine to make for a wonderful visit.

Otranto was a vital port throughout much of its long history. Today visitors can stroll along the waterfront, tour the fortress and visit the Church of San Pietro which dates to the time of the Byzantines.

Lecce is one of the best kept secrets in southern Italy. This is a truly beautiful town with stunning Baroque period architecture and an ancient Roman amphitheater which dates to the 2nd century AD.

SHORE EXCURSIONS

To make the most of your visit to Brindisi and surrounding areas we suggest you take one of our organized Shore Excursions. For information concerning tour content and pricing, consult your Shore Excursion Order Form or contact the Shore Excursion Desk. When going ashore, be advised to take only necessary items and secure any valuables onboard.

LOCAL CUSTOMS

Attire: Think conservative. Shorts and tank-tops are not recommended, especially when visiting local churches.

Bargaining: Most items have fixed prices, but it may be possible to get a discount on a large purchase. Some vendors may bargain, except for food items.

Tipping: Generally a 10% service charge is added to restaurant bills, however, as this amount does not all go to the waiter, it is normal to offer a 5% tip to the waiter in addition to any service charge. For taxi drivers, a 5-10% tip is acceptable.

LOCAL CUISINE AND DRINK SPECIALTIES

Throughout history the common people have had to make do with whatever they could grow, raise, gather, hunt or catch in the stream, river or sea. Much of what they produced or procured was either sold by necessity or simply taken through taxation. Those in power got the best of everything while those who toiled survived on the leftovers. Social status was often defined by food; what kind and how much. While the commoner boiled tripe with a few vegetables the wealthy famously feasted upon roasted beef stuffed with pork, stuffed with goose, stuffed with duck, stuffed with chicken stuffed with spiced fruit, bread and nuts.

So what does this have to do with the traditional cuisine of Brindisi

and the Puglia region of southern Italy? It can be boiled down to a simple phrase: "La cucina delle donne". Though not an exact translation, it might best be put into English as "Mom's home cooking". Throughout the centuries the traditional fare on the dining tables of Brindisi and much of southern Italy was modest yet, when mom got into the kitchen, it was magical. Combine that with great bread, cheese, pasta and perhaps the very best olive oil in all of Italy and you have the ancient foundation of this regional cuisine.

The recipes of the region have been passed down, mother to daughter, for generations. Pane di Altamura is one of the most popular breads of the region. It should be mentioned that in the 1st century BC, in the reign of Emperor Julius Caesar, the famous Roman poet Horace described the bread of the Puglia region of the country as the best in the world. Hyperbole, perhaps, but try a slice dipped in the local olive oil and you decide. Orecchiette alle Cime di Rapa is a combination of broccoli "rape" sweet garlic, olive oil, salty anchovies and chili peppers over orecchiette, the small half walnut shell-shaped pasta. Parmigiana di melanzane is a baked eggplant pie with tomato sauce and parmesan cheese. Polpetta, Italian meatballs, usually eaten as a second dish, made by mixing together beef, sweet sausage, veal, olive oil, parsley, garlic, pepper, eggs, seasoned bread crumbs and finely grated Parmesan.

Puglia is one of the largest wine producing regions in the Italy. Among the many favorites are Castel del Monte, Primitivo di Manduria, Salice Salentino, Negroamaro and Galatina Bianco. A number of the local wines are quite exceptional and life is too short to waste it on drinking bad wine. Cin cin!

SHOPPING FACILITIES

Most of the shops are located along Via Roma and Corso Garibaldi; very close to the Old Town. Shopping hours are generally from 9:00am to 1:00pm and 4:00pm to 8:30pm. Tuesday thru Saturday. Most shops are closed on Monday mornings or Saturday afternoon. All shops are closed on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

LOCAL CURRENCY

The unit of currency in Italy is the Euro. All Euro notes are legal tender in all countries of the Euro area. Most stores accept major credit cards.

POST OFFICE AND TELEPHONE

A Post Office is located nearby Brindisi's historic Old Town: Piazza della Vittoria.

Dial the following access numbers to use a personal calling card:

AT&T: 800.172.444

MCI: 800.90.5825

TOURIST INFORMATION

A Tourist Information Office is located near the waterfront of the "Old City" at Viale Regina Margherita, 43.

TRANSPORTATION

If you decide to take a taxi keep in mind that they can be quite ex-

