



The Sassi

The rock-hewn cave hotels and grotto churches of the Sassi, the old town, are the main attraction. But the new town also deserves exploration. Start in Piazza Vittorio Veneto, a popular meeting point, and continue along Via del Corso to Lucano la Bottega for an amaro. On Via Domenico Ridola, Chiesa del Purgatorio's carved façade features cautionary death imagery; further along, Mosto serves cocktails and craft beer on a broad promenade.



Sasso Barisano,
Matera.

City
hitlist

Matera

The “subterranean city” is next year’s European Capital of Culture, the result of a steady revival, writes **KATIE PARLA**.



SEE

MUSMA The wide-ranging collection of the Museo della Scultura Contemporanea Matera (MUSMA) spans sculpture from the late 19th to early 21st centuries. It's housed in Palazzo Pomarici in the Sassi, where its grand halls and courtyards, and even humble pantries are the backdrop to works by acclaimed artists including Carla Accardi, Maria Lai and Guido Strazza. Via San Giacomo, musma.it



STAY

Sextantio Le Grotte della Civita Located in Civita, the Sassi's oldest district, this 18-room boutique hotel takes a minimalist approach to décor in refurbished centuries-old cave dwellings with honey-hued stone walls and reclaimed-timber furnishings. The dining room, which doubles as a common area, is set in a deconsecrated 13th-century church. Via Civita, 28, legrottedellacivita.sextantio.it



Getting there
Trains from the closest airport, in the Pugliese capital Bari, to Matera take about 90 minutes.

EAT & DRINK



Enoteca dai Tosi

Spanning several subterranean levels, this bar (above) has interiors by a Belgian design firm and features green-glass lights that illuminate the cavernous spaces, including a former cistern. The list includes classic Italian cocktails and some 250 Italian wines. Via Bruno Buozzi, 12, enotecadaitosi.it

Stano

Near the edge of Sasso Barisano, where the old town meets the new, this family-run trattoria serves Matera's traditional cucina povera, featuring humble ingredients such as legumes, dried peppers and durum-wheat pasta. A highlight is lamb stew with potatoes and wild herbs, cooked in a terracotta pot sealed with dough. Via Santa Cesarea, 67/69, stanoristorazione.it

I Vizi degli Angeli

The small but well-chosen selection of natural flavours at this artisanal gelato shop ranges from classics such as hazelnut and pistachio to unique blends such as mallow and thyme, both plants which grow wild at the fringes of Matera's old and new towns. Via Domenico Ridola, 36, ivizidegliangeli.it

Take a crash course in the cheeses of Basilicata and neighbouring Puglia at La Bottega del Vicinato. Varieties include goat's cheese aged in wild herbs and cacioavallo made from the milk of the local Podolico cattle (Mercato di Via Marconi, Box 28).