

THE TIMES

Italy

Where to stay in southern Italy

From hotels with private beaches to villas on the coast, Annabelle Thorpe picks the 20 best places to stay in the South

Annabelle Thorpe

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Hotels

1 Borgo Egnazia Fasano, Puglia

Borgo Egnazia brought a new style of accommodation to Puglia when it opened in 2011. It's big, with 180 rooms and villas, but cleverly designed so it doesn't feel like a mega-resort. There are excellent kids clubs and a crèche (both included in the room rates), an 18-hole golf course and vast swimming pools. On hot days the beach clubs — with al fresco pizzerias — are the place to be. Rooms are cream and cool, and bigger families can book a villa.

Details: Doubles cost from £239 room only (00 39 080 225 5000, borgoegnazia.it)

2 Villa Sirio Santa Maria di Castellabate, Campania

It's all about the sunsets at Sirio, a 19-room boutique hotel that was once the summer villa of a noble Italian family. Right on the seafront in the pretty town of Santa Maria di Castellabate, the rooms have a traditional, unpretentious feel with rich fabrics and artwork commissioned for the hotel. It's also a great spot for dinner, although it's a good idea to book as the restaurant is a firm favourite with the locals.

Details: Doubles cost from £119 room-only (00 39 0974 96 1099, villasirio.it)

3 Suite 70 Reggio Calabria, Calabria

The boutique B&B concept pops up in Calabria at this chic four-room guesthouse. Bedrooms come in a coffee-and-butterscotch palette, with wi-fi, minibar, LCD TV and air-con, while the sleek breakfast room offers fresh pastries and cakes in the morning and somewhere to relax with a book later in the day. The location, right on the city's main thoroughfare, Corso Garibaldi, is unbeatable, with the sea just 20 metres away.

Details: Doubles from £94 B&B (00 39 0965 896 674, suite70.it)

4 L'Hotel in Pietra

Matera, Basilicata

The polar opposite of Egnazia, L'Hotel in Pietra is a converted 13th-century church, high up in Matera's oldest quarter, the Sassi Barisano. Like many of the buildings in the Sassi, the church was built into the caves and the bedrooms are converted from differently shaped spaces carved into the rock. Rooms are cool and muted and there's a wonderful vaulted breakfast room. It's half an hour to the coast.

Details: Doubles cost from £72 (00 39 083 534 4040, www.hotelinpietra.it)

5 Masseria Fumarola

Puglia

Fumarola is an ideal choice if you want a bit of countryside not too far from the coast. The old trulli farm buildings have been converted into 14 lovely rooms with a rustic feel — wrought-iron beds, flagged floors, and shuttered windows, and there's a long shady terrace for meals. The gardens, rich in fruit and olive trees, are delightful, and there's a good-sized pool. There are some great beaches a 20-minute drive away.

Details: Doubles cost from £136 B&B (00 39 080 430 3722, masseriefumarola.it)

6 La Sommità

Ostuni, Puglia

Upscale and sleek, La Sommità sits at the top of Puglia's most charming "white town", Ostuni. Built around a 16th-century palazzo, with a delightful garden filled with olive and citrus trees, Sommità has the feel of a retreat mixed with northern Italian style. The ten rooms are minimalist and stylish with stone floors and neutral colours, while the vaulted restaurant has one of the region's few Michelin stars. The nearest beach is ten minutes' drive away.

Details: Doubles from £105 B&B (i-escape.com)

7 Tenuta Seliano

Paestum, Campania

If you're after rustic chic rather than cream-walled minimalism, Tenuta Seliano will hit the spot. It is a 19th-century country estate 5km from the coast and the ancient site of Paestum, with comfortable rooms, beautiful grounds and a large, sunlit pool. Food is a big part of a stay at Seliano, where dinners are taken communally around a long table, with plenty of mozzarella from the farm's buffalo herd, and hearty local dishes.

Details: Doubles cost from £79 B&B (00 39 082 872 3634, agriturismoseliano.it)

8 Hotel Torre Fiore

Pisticci, Basilicata

The history of Torre Fiore is part of what makes it so special; originally a military outpost to guard against the Turkish army, 600 years later it is a family-run boutique hotel that aims to combine the hotel's rich heritage with 21st-century comforts. Suites come with all mod-cons; freestanding baths, vast beds, iPod docks and working fireplaces. The restaurant uses local ingredients and recipes and the nearest beach is 15 minutes away.

Details: Doubles cost from £111 B&B (00 39 0835 58 0239, hoteltorrefiore.com)

9 Piccolo Grand Hotel

Pizzo, Calabria

The pretty town of Pizzo in southern Calabria is straight out of a 1960s Italian movie, with a fine piazza, long beaches and houses clustered on a hill above the sea. The Piccolo Grand is in the heart of the town, with just 12 rooms combining clean white decor with vivid cobalt and green furnishings. Sundowners on the roof are a must, and there's a shuttle to the nearby beach.

Details: Doubles cost from £169 B&B (00 39 0963 533293, piccolograndhotel.com)

10 Locanda delle Donne Monache

Maratea, Basilicata

A former 18th-century convent, Donne Monache has been cleverly converted into a sleek hotel with wonderful views over the rooftops of Maratea. There are 27 stylish rooms in white with splashes of colour, while outside the gardens are rich with scented jasmine. The hotel's restaurant, Il Sacello, is great for dinner and there's a regular shuttle to the hotel's private beach.

Details: Doubles cost from £106 B&B through Chic Retreats (020-3397 0085, chicretreats.com)

Villas

11 Villa Ligeia

Maratea, Basilicata

Round up siblings, cousins or friends and stage a dolce vita-style get-together at this sprawling 1960s holiday home. Amid nine acres of grounds, this is a house built for memories; sundowners on the roof, lazy afternoons in the hammocks in the woods, dinners in one of the four eating areas. The gardens cascade down the hillside to the sea, and there are paths directly from the house to the beach, two minutes away.

Details: From £2,000 per week, for 14 (holidaylettings.co.uk)

12 Le Antiche Pajare

Santa Maria di Leuca, Puglia

Ideal for families, this restored, stone-walled farmhouse is steps away from a sandy beach that's perfect for lazy afternoons of swimming and building sandcastles. The house is an old-style *pajare* with thick walls that keep it cool all year round and lush gardens with neat lawned areas and rockeries, studded with succulents and flowering shrubs. Bedrooms are white-walled, stone-flagged and coolly comfortable.

Details: From £2,678 per week, for six (020-7377 8518, thinkpuglia.com)

13 Villa MoJo

Villammare, Campania

High in the hills above Villammare, with spectacular views of the Cilento National Park, this villa sleeps ten in five bedrooms. There's a 12 by 6m pool, and plenty of outside space, while inside, the house is decorated in a contemporary style with splashes of colour. Added touches include four hours' maid service a day, wi-fi and a pizza oven. The beach is just 600 metres away and you can take a boat from nearby Scario to Porto Infreschi.

Details: From €4,375 per week for ten (00 39 05 85 92 0 98, merrioncharles.com)

14 Masseria Mimosa Gialla

Matera, Basilicata

Staying in rural Italy doesn't have to mean converted farmhouses and old buildings; Mimosa is a stunning new-build villa in a hilltop location just outside Matera, and about 20 minutes from white-sand beaches. Elegant cloisters outside make a perfect location for al fresco suppers, while inside the gleaming state-of-the-art kitchen and spectacular lounge, with star-vaulted ceiling, have a true A-list feel. For adults only, this is one of the region's most exclusive addresses.

Details: From £1,490 per week, for six (020-7401 1010, cvtravel.co.uk)

15 Residence Il Cilentano

San Marco, Campania

Combine the freedom of self-catering with the ease of a hotel stay at Il Cilentano, just a couple of minutes' walk from the pretty seaside resort of San Marco. The apartments have a pleasing, contemporary feel with simple cooking facilities. Ideal for families with young children, it has a pool for kids as well as a sizeable one for adults, a range of activities and a kids club in high season.

Details: A week in a one-bed apartment (sleeping two to four) costs from £733, including car hire but not flights (01694 722193, long-travel.co.uk)

16 Villa Cervarolo

Ostuni, Puglia

From the outside, Villa Cervarolo looks like a traditional trulli farmhouse, with conical roofs surrounded by olive groves. Inside it's more like a Milanese boutique hotel; gleaming teak furniture, White Company linens, and goatskin rugs. The contemporary kitchen is airy and cool, and there's a big outdoor prep and barbecue area. This is self-catering in serious style (naturally a chef can be hired) and the price reflects that. Beaches are a 20-minute drive.

Details: From £2,597 per week for six (i-escape.com)

17 Villa Franca

Maratea, Basilicata

A fantastic house for a get-together, Villa Franca sleeps up to 13 and offers a vast amount of space. It has lawned gardens, two large sitting rooms and scattered terraces and patios with sea views. Rooms are traditionally furnished and there's a fun bar area in the lounge and dining space. A rough track leads from the villa to the beach — although it may be hard to leave the 15m pool.

Details: From £3,260 per week for 13 ([homeaway.com](https://www.homeaway.com), ref 865674)

18 Residenza Vistamare

Massa Lubrense, Amalfi coast

King Murat of Naples, who was Napoleon's brother-in-law, stayed in this villa with awe-inspiring views to Capri and Mount Vesuvius back in 1808. His room has been preserved with frescoed walls and wooden furniture in the villa which is full of antiques, chandeliers and original tiles. There are five rooms sleeping nine, a private pool, and plenty of outside space to appreciate the view over the Gulf of Naples.

Details: From £5,329 a week for ten (0845 6182205, [akvillas.com](https://www.akvillas.com))

19 Cliff House

Capo Vaticano, Calabria

As its name suggests, this four-bedroom property is high on the cliffs, with views to the Aeolian islands. Two bedrooms are in the main building, the other two in individual cottages in the grounds. Decorated in rustic, shabby-chic style, the house has a large pool and a lovely terrace, which is the perfect place to sit and watch the sunset over Stromboli. A private path leads 400 steps down to the beach. Tropea, with its Baroque palaces and quiet piazzas, is 10km away.

Details: From £2,136 per week for eight ([homeaway.co.uk](https://www.homeaway.co.uk), property 99868)

20 Villa Jenna

Zambrone, Calabria

There's a real home from home feel to Villa Jenna, making it perfect for families, with three spacious bedrooms, cosy lounge and kitchen and lovely gardens with fruit trees and tropical plants. This corner of Calabria is famed for its fantastic beaches, and white-sand Zambrone, 1.5km away, is one of the most beautiful, while the medieval town of Tropea — just ten minutes' drive — is the prettiest in the region.

Details: From £525 per week for eight ([holidaylettings.co.uk](https://www.holidaylettings.co.uk), ref 307824)

Related Images



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Brooke Carolina



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