**A DAY OUT IN LECCE**

**Lecce** is an Apulian treasure located in the Salento area; it is called the 'Florence of South Italy' due to an impressively high number of churches and palaces built in the Baroque style from the local soft limestone that is easy to work.

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**TOP SIGHTS**
- **Porta Napoli**
- The Duomo Square (the Bishop’s palace, the seminary)
- **Piazza Sant’Oronzo**
- Column and statue of the Patron Saint
- The Palace of the seat (Sedile)
- Amphitheatre
- The Basilica of Santa Croce
- Palazzo dei Celestini
- Saint Irene church

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**TRIUMPHAL ARCH**

**Porta Napoli**, one of the three ancient gates, to enter into the historic town center. It was built in 1548 to welcome the ruler of the Holy Roman Empire and King of Italy and Germany at the time, **Charle V**.

**The Obelisk**: The Obelisk of Lecce was built in 1822 by the sculptor Vito Carluccio on the design of Luigi Cipolla, in honor of Ferdinand I of Bourbon.

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**THE DOME SQUARE**: the Bishop’s Palace, the Seminary

It is one of the most beautiful squares in Europe and one of the rare examples of enclosed square, the tourist has the impression of entering a stage. The church was originally built between in 1144-1230, then totally restored in the 1659–70 by **Giuseppe Zimbalo**, by the order of bishop Luigi Pappacoda, who also built the bell tower, with an octagonal loggia. The cathedral has two entrances. The principal facade is sober and elegant, while the second portal is a masterpiece of Baroque art with statues representing Saint Orontius between Saint Justus and Saint Fortunatus. This double face architecture increases its fascination. Inside the cathedral there are twelve altars.

**The Cathedral Tower**, about 70 meters, offers a vision of a scene at the top that has no equal and that includes even the sea. The bell tower has a square plan and is composed of five tapered floors.
The amphitheatre dating back the Roman times is located in the main square, Piazza Sant’Oronzo, it is half buried today. The amphitheatre was originally built to seat over 25,000 people, and is now used for music and art events. Local workers discovered the amphitheatre by accident a few hundred years ago during some City excavations.

THE PALACE OF THE SEAT

The Palace of the Seat has a square plan and opens on two sides spacious pointed arches. Dates back to 1592, it has been the Town Hall until 1851. To it adjoins the former church of San Marco, built by the Venetians in 1543, with splendid portal, decorated with a winged lion.

THE COLUMN OF SAINT ORONZO

Column of St Oronzo statue : (Lecce’s patron) was given to Lecce by the city of Brindisi, because Saint Oronzo was reputed to have cured the plague in Brindisi. The column was one of a pair that marked the end of the Appian Way, the main road between Rome and southern Italy.

Construction of the church began in 1353, but the work was only completed a few centuries later, in 1695 (first by Francesco Antonio zinbaldo and after by Gabriele Penna). The church is a baroque masterpiece and it has a richly decorated façade with animals, grotesque figures and vegetables, and a large rose window. In the interior there are the tombs of the Adorni family and 16 baroque altars.

St. Irene: This church was commissioned in 1591 by the Theatines and dedicated to Saint Irene . The architect was Francesco Grimaldi). It has a large façade showing different styles in the upper and lower parts. Above the portal stands a statue of St Irene (1717) by Mauro Manieri.