



The Runaway Italian

Custom Travel Planning and Tours to Secret Italy

3 Unique Alberghi Diffusi in secret Italy

Immerse yourself in the simplicity of the most authentic local living: Alberghi Diffusi



During my independent travels around Italy as an enthusiastic explorer of my native country and more recently as a Tour Manager, I have always been keen to experience the most 'authentic' food, traditions, culture and accommodation. I have searched far and wide for **home from home hospitality** that would provide all the comforts but none of the impersonal atmosphere of a hotel.

Unfortunately in a desire to accommodate an ever growing number of tourists, a huge number of soulless chain hotels have been built all across the country and if like me, you believe in stepping off the tourist trail and experiencing a deeper flavour of Italian culture then you will love the innovative concept of **Alberghi Diffusi**.

Alberghi Diffusi literally meaning 'scattered hotels' is in my view a great way of being totally immersed in the local way of living. Its creator, **Mr Dall'Ara** at the beginning of the '80s wanted to find a sustainable way to save many historic towns and villages that had been abandoned or were in disrepair and that's when he came up with the idea of the 'Albergo Diffuso'.

Rooms tend to be decorated in an authentic style down to every detail and accessory and are scattered throughout different buildings in historic towns or villages, but overseen by one manager. A traditional breakfast might be served at a local café or in the kitchen of one of the local houses or even brought to your room.

Personally I couldn't think of a better way of enjoying my stay than having contact with the local population and having the authentic experience of living within their community. And of course these fantastic places don't just offer travellers a door into a traditional way of life, but are also a way of promoting sustainable travel, as it's indeed more cost effective to reconvert existing rooms or structures than build a new hotel.

There are currently more than 40 official **Alberghi Diffusi** in Italy and over 100 more are being planned.



*'Hospitality is when people leave your home and feel better about themselves and not about you' – **Shauna Niequist***

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During my search for some of the most authentic and atmospheric **Alberghi Diffusi** out there, I have come across **3 gems** that sum up everything that's special and unique about this kind of hospitality and I just want to share them with all of you discerning travellers!

1. Torre della Botonta, Umbria



Tower of Botonta was founded in 2010 with the desire of redeveloping the old buildings of **Castel San Giovanni** and revive them through the concept of 'albergo diffuso'. The castle lying on the border between **Spoleto** and **Trevi** was involved in several wars and the ancient name 'Botonta' means in fact borderland.

The small fortified village of Castel San Giovanni is located at the centre of **Umbria**, the green heartland of Italy and with many interesting nearby towns to explore, it's a very special place to base yourself. The accommodation is spread out among different buildings, giving visitors a taste of life in a medieval castle, complete with a public oven, a bank and a watchtower.

Guests can retreat to peace and quiet away from daily stress, become inhabitants of the village for a few days and come into contact with the history of a gone-by way of life.

It is a place that had to be reconquered and now it conquers all with its beauty!



Dining in a unique setting at **Torre della Botonta**

2. Sextantio Le Grotte della Civita, Matera, Basilicata

If you are looking for the ultimate hideaway and romantic place to reconnect with your loved one or simply experience a truly ancient way of living, then nothing fits the bill better than **Grotte della Civita in the UNESCO listed town of Matera.**

Inhabited since prehistoric times, **Matera and its Sassi** (cave dwellings) offer a spectacular and rugged landscape of ravines and grottoes. Many of Matera's remarkable underground spaces have been turned into accommodation with a unique appeal that you will find nowhere else in Italy.

This **Albergo Diffuso** is placed in the oldest part of the Sassi quarters and consists of 18 cave rooms and an ancient church, now used as a common area and a restaurant, all renovated to retain their original features with the minimal addition of modern amenities.

Wandering around Matera, it's easy to fall under the spell of its very special charm, as its landscape remains unchanged through thousands of years and its magical quality can only be experienced in person.

I can really say that staying at Grotte della Civita in this captivating city is truly a once-in-a-lifetime experience!



*'If you want to discover the deeper sense of a place, you have to sleep in a house of that place, not in an international hotel' – **Herman Hesse***

3. Sotto Le Cummerse, Locorotondo, Puglia

This Albergo Diffuso consists of several apartments scattered in the historic centre of **Locorotondo**, one of the most beautiful small towns **in Puglia in southern Italy**. The town lies in the heart of **Valle d'Itria**, where you will find an extraordinary concentration of traditional coned-roofed houses, **the trulli**. Here you are also well placed to visit other gems in this area, such as **Monopoli, Ostuni also known as the White City and Polignano a Mare**.

Born out of careful restoration and of the owners' love of the town where they were born and grew up, the typical local buildings known as **'cummerse' (of rectangular plan and double-pitched roofs)** have been turned into beautiful apartments, which invite guests to immerse themselves in the everyday life of the town, side by side with the locals.

Carefully restored, the 14 apartments of **Sotto Le Cummerse** have preserved intact the structure, materials and fascination of the old dwellings of Locorotondo: whitewashed walls, exposed natural stone, wooden furniture, doors and windows, snow-white fabrics.

Getting lost in this charming hilltop town and through its sparring alleys lined with craftsmen's workshops, you can certainly experience southern Italy's past and traditions and even if only for one day, depending on the length of your stay, you can feel like one of the locals in this unique Albergo Diffuso.

*'Guests may forget what you said but they will never forget how you made them feel' - **Unknown***



Locorotondo, Puglia

If you have enjoyed reading this guide and need help planning your visit to these unique **Alberghi Diffusi**, I can prepare for you uniquely tailored itineraries, packed full of all the insider information you need and won't find in your average guidebooks. For any further information, check out one of my custom travel services, [Magica Italia Package](#)

I hope to help you make your travels to Italy memorable!