

BRINDISI – HISTORIC AND ARTISTIC ITINERARIES

Itinerary 3: the seafront



From the Railway station, inaugurated by the princes Umberto and Amedeo of Savoia in 1865, you cross “Crispi square” then turn right at the second street which is “Via Indipendenza” where on the corner of “Via Saponea” on the left, you will see the Greek-orthodox **1 church of Saint Nicholas**, completed in 1894, thanks to the contribution of the then tsar, Nicholas II. On the opposite side of the street you can admire the beautiful facade in Venetian style of the **Dell’Aglio building**; not far ahead, to the left, is the little square of the **2 Church of Piety**



The Piety

Nowadays nothing is remaining from the original little church because of the several transformations made during years. In fact, the church is located in an area that was insalubrious, on the border of the town, close to marshes.

Inside, there is an interesting mosaic on the apse wall named “Piety, St. Francis and Brindisi”, made on 60's

Continuing along and having crossed “Corso Roma”, approximately 50 meters on the right, you will reach the renovated **3 St. James Bastion**, the rampart strategic tower which was the defensive system built during the fifteenth century by the Aragon’s. Today this venue is used for public meetings and art exhibitions.

Going back onto Corso Roma, take note of the many buildings which were constructed in “Liberty” style, for example **4 the Lisco building** and the “Perasso” school. Still ahead we reach “Corso Garibaldi”, the main pedestrian passage of the city; this was the ancient “Mena”, a navigable channel of the pre-Romans age,

where for centuries to come, waters and waste water from the high ground flowed; this was subsequently cleared and transformed into a road by Ferdinand IV of Borbone (1797).



Just before you reach the seafront, you can stop and admire the garden of **5 Vittorio Emanuele II Square**, entirely renovated in 2001; on this square there is the **Dolphin's Fountain**, built in 1876 by Belliazzi, and the **Virgil's monument**, a marble work by Floriano Bodini (1988).

Close to this square, you will see the building of the Bank of Italy built in 1927 and on the harbour-office wall, there is the **6 Sundial**, built in 1917 by captain Alberto de Albertis, who was an expert of Italian's sundials.

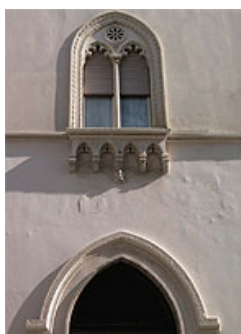
Following to the left the "lungomare Regina Margherita", you will see the two more plaques on the wall of the of the Harbour-Office building: the first is a marble epigraph in memory of the rescue of one hundred thousand Serbian refugees during the Great

War. The second is a bronze plate awarding the city of Brindisi "The Honourable War Merit Cross", for its contribution in the First World War effort.

Further ahead the square widens and what stands out is the new-gothic style **7 Dionisi building**. Continuing on "via Dogana" on the right we arrive at the interesting portal of the **8 Guerrieri building** (formerly De Leo-Massa building), where the De Leo family heraldry still stands out in grand style, of which the archbishop and the studios Annibale De Leo were both members: he founded the first public library of the region in 1798 which today finds itself in Piazza Duomo (see itinerary 1).

Turn left into on Via Congregazione where you will see the façade of the Gothic-Catalan **9 Crudomonte building**, originally of the XVth century and subsequently modified, today this is the tax office.

Immediately after this, is the new-gothic style of the **Evangelical Waldensian church** opened to the cult in 1925.



Crudomonte building



Dionisi building



Montenegro building

Turning back along the seafront, you will come to the **10 Virgil Steps**, which will lead you to the Harbour Columns (see itinerary 1). Continuing along the seafront you will see various baroque style buildings, constructed in the late eighteenth hundreds during the prequalification of the harbour, as port of call for the "Indian Mail Route". A British shipping operation had established a naval link with routes from Brindisi to Bombay and back (1870-1914).

One of these is the **11 Hotel Internazionale**, a typical example of fine architecture built in the early 1800. In its time, this hotel has hosted rulers, nobles and rich traders in transit to India; during the time that Brindisi was capital of Italy (10/9/1943 - 11/2/1944) the hotel's frescoed hall hosted parliamentary and governmental meetings, chaired by the king Vittorio Emanuele III

A little ahead is the ancient building, which today is known as **12 Tourist's House**, a construction which dates back to the Crusaders and it was here that they built a covered dock. Subsequently, a church dedicated to St. Giovanni Elemosiniere (St. John of Charity) was built in this area and the building was totally modified by the new owners. Today it is used as a tourist structure and for public meetings, art exhibitions and other events.

Continuing on "Via Regina Margherita" you will arrive at the **13 Montenegro building**, a sixteenth century structure, which today is residence to the chief administrator. This is possibly the best example of a baroque style building. The name of this building derived from the Petrovich family who came from Montenegro and changed their surname from Petrovich to Montenegro once they had established themselves in the city, which was at the end of XVII century. Some of the famous people who stayed over in this palace were King Ferdinand IVth (1797) and Gioacchino Murat (1818). It was later acquired by the Peninsula and Oriental

Steam Navigation Company, owners of the "Indian Mail Route", and their symbol can still be seen on the upper part of the building's main entrance.

Continuing along the seafront, on the left, you will reach Piazza Baccarini and on "Via Camassa" you can see the remains of the ancient **14 Messapic wall ruins** dating back to 400-300 b.C. These formed part of the city's wall which was later reused during the Roman era.

Going back along the seafront and continuing a little ahead, you will cross over "Piazza Lenio Flacco" to then reach "Via Thaon de Ravel", this is a fisherman's terrain: here it is common to find old and young artisans of fishing profession, with their nets and wooden boats. This neighbourhood is known as **15 "Sciabiche"**, the name given to the nets used by the fishermen. When renovations were done to the harbour at the beginning of the last century, some of these fishermen were moved to the opposite shoreline, to continue with their ancient art, in bright colour and grand tradition.

Returning in the direction of the "Montenegro building", on the opposite side of the street, you will find a **"motor-boat"** shuttle service. These boats will ferry you to the opposite side of the inner port to visit the striking and colourful **16 Fishermen's Village**. Once you have experienced this wonderful tradition, you can take a short walk the square on the right which boasts what is traditionally the landmark of Brindisi **17 The Italian Sailors Monument**. From here the panoramic view to the city is most impressive and even more beautiful is the bird's eye view from the top of the Monument.

Near the Pigonati Channel you enter the main port, naturally divided in two parts, West and East Coves; at this point one meets the Italian Sailor Monument built in 1933 in the shape of a rudder, which stands 54 meters tall.

The funds for this construction took approximately 10 years to collect and the famous tenor Tito Schipa took a particular interest in this project contributing the takings from his concerts.

At the base of the monument is a sacred chapel in memory of the fallen sailors during both world wars as well as the bell from the battle ship "Benedetto Brin", which sank in the port of Brindisi in 1915. In the square at the entrance there are two anchors which are relics from Austrian-Hungary battle ships as well two submarine cannons of the same era.

A marble Our Lady statue has been put at the top of the monument in 1954.



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