

# ITALIA!™

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## COOKING WITH PALAZZO DUCALE VENTURI

No experience immerses you into the local culture more than a cooking class, and I wasn't going to pass on a chance to make regional pasta with chef Antonio Russo.

The Palazzo is a converted 16th-century aristocratic palace hotel situated in the region of Salento in southern Puglia, about 30 minutes' drive from Lecce. Carefully restored to maintain its heritage, every part of the hotel has retained much of the stone work in the style originally intended. With the original fresco on the roof of the dining room and the ancient salt ovens that are still in use today, a stay in Palazzo Ducale Venturi is stepping into Italian nobility lifestyle.

Chef Russo gets me to work on four styles of pasta shapes. *Sagne 'ncannulate, orecchiette, minchiareddi and cavatelli*. He tells me I have natural talent and I believe him. We cook them in a fresh tomato sauce that is typical of the region, as well as a green sauce made from boiled turnip tops – fresh and seasonal ingredients which the Puglian cuisine is known for – mixed with goat's cheese, which I washed down perfectly with a glass of local Primitivo rosé.

Like other experiences offered at the Palazzo Ducale Venturi, Chef Russo's cooking classes are delightfully personal, tailored for guests who want more than just a place to stay. For the curious traveller, the Palazzo also offers private *pizzica* dance lessons, baroque art tours of Lecce, wine tours, and even vintage car tours in a 1963 Fiat 500.

Palazzo Ducale Venturi is one of the first historical residences in Italy to be certified Green Key, an international recognition that rewards excellence in the field of environmental responsibility and sustainable operation in the tourism sector. The Palazzo is approximately 90km, an hour and a half's drive, from Salento (Brindisi) Airport. Private transfers can be arranged with the hotel. Alternatively, local buses serve main towns in the area. Change at Lecce and Maglie for Minervino di Lecce.

Palazzo Ducale Venturi, Via Podgora n.60, 73027 Minervino di Lecce (LE), Lecce [www.palazzoducaleventuri.com](http://www.palazzoducaleventuri.com)



Image - Palazzo Ducale Venturi

Hotel and Wellness



Image - Palazzo Ducale Venturi



The hotel lobby & dining room



Image - Palazzo Ducale Venturi

Image - Palazzo Ducale Venturi