



“White” is the key word for this town...

**It’s a spiderweb of streets and it’s beautiful.**

Ostuni is probably not a town you’ve heard of before. It’s known as the “White Town” and is in the Province of Puglia, close to heel of Italy.

The medieval walled city was built helter-skelter. The streets go here and there with no plan in mind. It’s a confusing maze of alleyways, staircases and arches. And thank goodness for the arches! Buildings were built on top of each other and the arches support the houses they connect so the archways make up for the lack of strong foundations.

The town saw a steady stream of invaders: Greeks, Romans, Normans,

Byzantines, and the list goes on. Some speculate that the town was built like a labyrinth in order to confuse the enemy. The area even had Neanderthal hunters who lived in the numerous grottoes in the area (50,000 years ago). The Adriatic is only a hop-skip-and-a-jump from the town so there was plenty of shelter available. There was even the skeleton of a 20-year-old pregnant woman from 25,000 years ago found buried in a hole in a grotto. “Delia,” as she was named, is displayed in the Church in the historic center.



*White is the name of the game.*



*Another narrow cobblestone street*



*Panorama of the White City of Ostuni*



*Stairs to??*

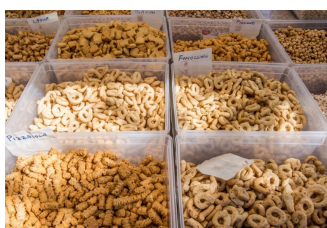
The stark white buildings dazzle in the sun and are punctuated with bright green and blue wooden doors and pots and plants of red geraniums and cacti. Why all the white paint? In the 17th century a plague killed millions in the area (sound familiar?). The people of the town began painting the infected houses with a mixture of limestone dust and water. Then they noticed something: there was less illness around the white houses—a miracle!--they thought. It was probably because of the antibacterial effect of the calcium carbonate. (It's found in limestone and today is even added to Comet for cleaning and scrubbing.) The white houses attract a lot of tourists, particularly in the summer and so the government encourages everyone to repaint every two years. The incentive is that they pay half the cost.

If you visit, prepare to get lost. Cobblestones (those darn stones again!) lead into what look like houses but are small restaurants, stairs go up to little areas that overlook the sea, more stairs lead to the tops of houses with the wash drying on the roof. Some streets narrow down to such a small width that any motorized vehicle is excluded—no room to get through. And if you walk on some of the stairs, the cactus are close enough to snag your clothes!

[Click here to see the White Town.](#)



*Colorful produce at the market*



*Puglia's famous taralle*



*Red hot chili peppers*

There is a market on the outskirts of the town that offers food and local specialties that can tempt not only your palate but also your eyeballs. There are red, red, chilies and other vibrant fresh produce along with the local Puglia taralle, round or straight breadsticks, in a variety of flavors: fennel, chili, pizza, onion, and bacon among them. The area also is known for its wine and olive oil.

It's a little known town to tourists but well-known to Italians. Maybe on your next trip, you can visit the White City.

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