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THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF MATERA: A JOURNEY BETWEEN ARCHAEOLOGY, NATURE AND RESPONSIBILITY

BY MATERAHUB



The Matera, a fascinating city nestled among the beautiful typical karst morphologies of the Murgia, the Gravina, is the custodian of an extraordinary cultural heritage, as evidenced by the research of different archeologists. For example, Eleonora Bracco, born in Tourin in 1905, and became, at the young age of 28 years old, the director of the Domenico Ridola Archaeological Museum in Matera has dedicated years of study to the Agro di Matera, uncovering a history that winds its way through caves, ravines and millenary evidence.

You can read her research here: <https://www.energheia.org/131512.html>

Since prehistoric times, human presence has left its mark on this land, exploiting the natural cavities to practice beekeeping and grazing animals.

As we make our way towards southern Matera, a small road facilitates access to San Pellegrino All'Ofra and other churches and rock structures in the area. These paths take us back in time to the Neolithic period, offering a 7,000-year journey through human history.



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The rocky complex of San Pellegrino All'Ofra is an extraordinary place that stretches for about 200 metres on the rock face, revealing the artistry of man over the centuries. The structure, built on three overlapping levels of caves, houses the Church of San Pellegrino All'Ofra, with frescoes that still retain their original vivid colours, including one dedicated to St Nicola.



Unfortunately, access to this heritage is currently forbidden, as the site is in a state of disrepair and at risk of imminent collapse, reported by experts who predict deterioration within this year. The question arises: how can we preserve and enhance these archaeological finds? The answer starts with respect and care. Our commitment to the preservation of these vestiges of the past is crucial. Awareness of the value of such sites and careful treatment are crucial to ensure that future generations can still contemplate the magnificence of these structures.

Despite the current visiting ban, the surrounding area is a treasure trove of unique biodiversity: from the vulture to the otter, from the black stork to the wild boar. Nature in this region is extraordinary and must be preserved. Our advice is to admire the natural beauty from afar when necessary, respecting the delicate balance between man and the environment.

The cultural heritage of Matera is a treasure that requires our attention and care. Respecting nature, preserving marvellous structures and recognising the value of these testimonies are essential steps to ensure that Matera continues to shine as an example of the extraordinary human capacity to create and prosper over the centuries.

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