

What is Casa Noha

Casa Noha is a part of an ancient palace.

The palace was built a long time ago.

Family de Noha built the palace.

Family de Noha was a very rich family.

The palace is placed in the oldest district of Matera, next to the Duomo.

In this area there were many palaces of rich families.



The house is made of calcarenite.

Calcarenite is a very breakable rock that can be cut to make blocks.

With blocks from this rock you can build houses.

Casa Noha has few rooms.

There are:

- the ticket office
- three rooms with videos that show you the history of Matera
- the old kitchen with a table, a chair and a stonework kitchen
- a room with a table with a big TV screen and tablets

You can touch the display and the tablets to choose what to see in Matera.

- a room where you can rest
- the shop.

Long time ago a new family used to live in Casa Noha.

This family was called Fodale Latorre.

This family gave this house to FAI.

FAI is Fondo Ambiente Italiano (The National Trust for Italy).

Thanks to FAI everybody can now visit Casa Noha.

Videos you will watch in the rooms of Casa Noha

Casa Noha is an important place for tourists in Matera.

At Casa Noha you can watch 4 videos that explain:

- how people built the city of Matera
- the inhabitants of Matera
- how it became a big city.

These videos are entitled I Sassi invisibili [the invisible stones].



Video 1 – the city of Matera

Video 1 tells the history of the city of Matera.

Long time ago the first inhabitants of Matera lived in small villages built on the rocks.

A village is a very small city.

The first inhabitants were farmers.

A farmer is a person that grows plants that feed people.

With the passing of time, the inhabitants started building the city.

To build the city the inhabitants dug the rock to make blocks.

The blocks were used to build the houses over or in front of the dug holes.

The holes became cellars or warehouses.

Inhabitants built houses one next to the other, starting from the bottom upwards.

The inhabitants called Sassi [Stones] this group of houses.

The city of Matera became very rich.

Matera was the most important city of this area.

At Matera people bought and sold these products:

- wool
- silk
- flour.

The inhabitants built palaces and churches on the top of the rock.

When people stopped buying products and the other cities became more important, Matera became poor.

Many inhabitants went away because there weren't work and money any more. The other inhabitants remained in the city and started living in the dug holes without windows.

Families were big and the rooms were small.

Animals lived together with the persons.

In the end there wasn't enough to eat, life wasn't healthy and the inhabitants used to get sick frequently.



Video 2 – Carlo Levi

Video 2 tells about Carlo Levi, who he was and what he did.

Carlo Levi was a painter and a writer.

A painter is a person that draws and uses colours to make artworks.

In this video you can watch his paintings.

Carlo Levi paints people who live in the Sassi.

A writer is a person that writes books and that tells interesting things.

While you watch the video you will hear the voice of a woman reading some pages of a book by Carlo Levi.

Carlo Levi tells about the life in the Sassi of Matera.

Video 3 – Matera becomes famous

Video 3 tells about how and when Matera became famous.

The video starts with a famous painting of Carlo Levi and the cover of his most famous book.

The title of the book is *Cristo si è fermato ad Eboli* [Christ stopped at Eboli]

Thanks to this book Italians got to know Matera and his history.

The ministers of Italian Government visited Matera and saw how people lived.

The ministers of the Government are important people that can decide to better life of people.

The ministers decided to help people living better and found new houses for them.

The inhabitants of Matera left the Sassi.

People went living in new houses built around the Sassi of Matera.

After many years, some people thought that the Sassi of Matera were very nice and decided that it was possible to go back living in those ancient houses.

In order to go back living they needed to be fixed.

It was necessary:

- to make new roads
- to have water get there
- to have electricity get there
- to have gas to heat and cook get there
- to make sewers.

Many works were needed to fix the Sassi.

Nowadays many people live in the Sassi. There are shops, hotels and restaurants.

Nowadays Matera is a nice and famous city, that everybody knows around the world.

Every year many people go visit it.

Video 4 – the feast of the Madonna della Bruna

Video 4 tells about the feast of the Madonna della Bruna.

In this video you watch a feast.

It's the feast of the Madonna della Bruna.

People in Matera think 3 different things about the name of the Madonna della Bruna.

The reason of the name Madonna della Bruna is:

- the word bruna means dark – inside the Duomo there was a painting with a Madonna with dark skin
- the word bruna is similar to Hebron – long time ago Madonna went to Hebron to greet her cousin Elisabetta
- the word bruna also means protection – Madonna della Bruna protects people that pray her.

Every year this feast is on July 2nd.

During the feast people carry the statue of Madonna on a chariot across the city.

At the end, when the statue of the Madonna goes off the chariot and left in the Duomo, the chariot goes back to the main square.

Here the inhabitants destroy the chariot.

If you can take a piece of the chariot, this will bring luck to you.