

ORIGINAL RESEARCH · SEPTEMBER 2026

How many international residents actually live around Manduria?

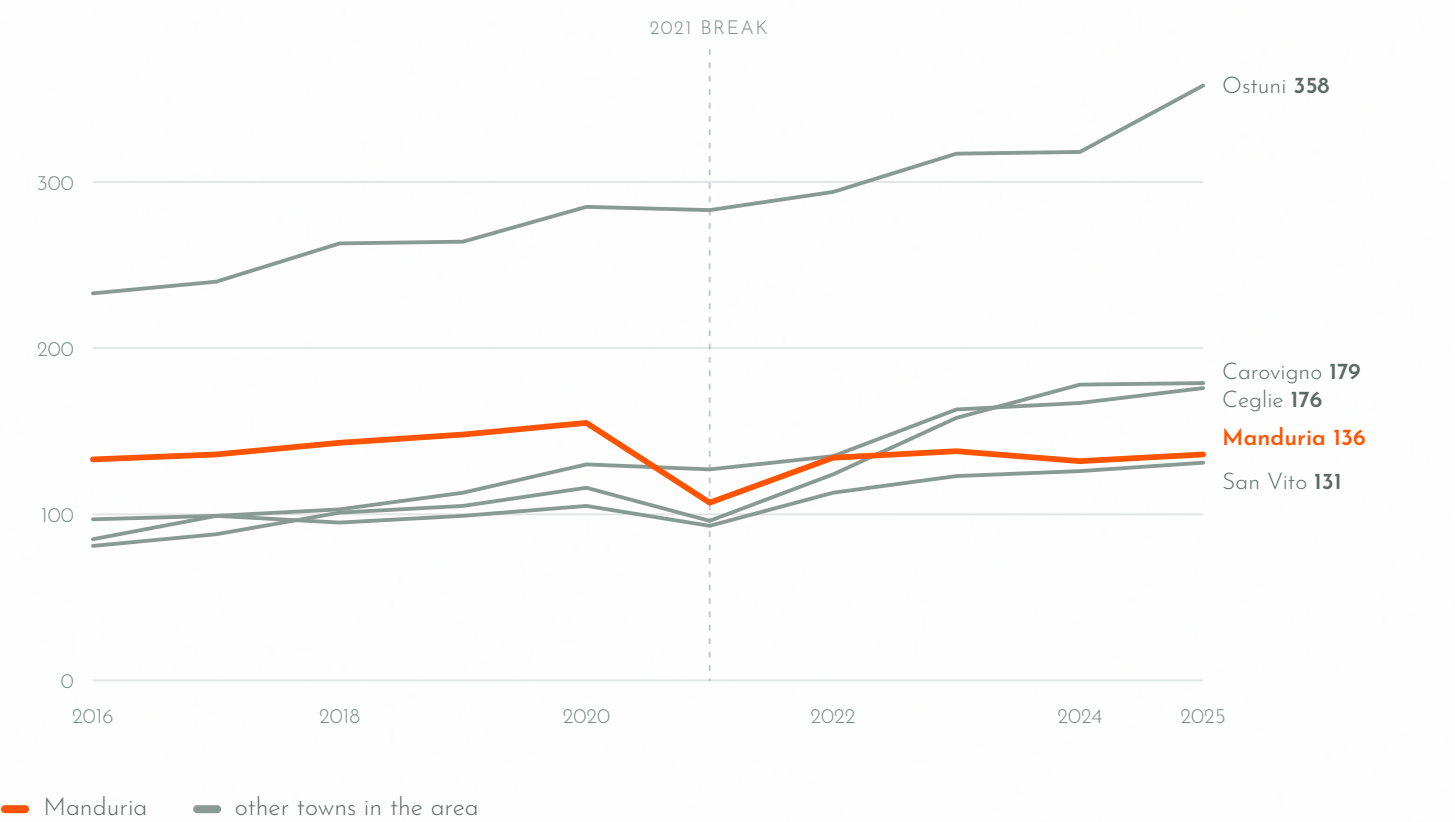
Everyone selling you a house in Puglia has an opinion. We went and counted, town by town, from the official population register. Here is what the numbers say, including the part that does not flatter us.

1,283 residents from western Europe and North America in the 22 towns of the Alto Salento, 1 January 2025	+36% growth across the area in four years, from 946 in 2021	136 of them live in Manduria, up 27% since 2021	85% of Manduria's western residents are German-speaking. In the rest of the area, 25%
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Where the international wave went, and where it is still arriving

The Alto Salento is the band of towns between the trulli country and the Ionian sea: Ostuni and Carovigno at the top, Manduria at the bottom, twenty-two towns in between. Over the last decade it has become quietly international, and the change is not evenly spread. It arrived first in the north, within sight of the coast road, and it is working its way down.

Residents holding western European or North American citizenship, 2016-2025



Source: Istat, resident population by citizenship, 1 January of each year. Hover any point for the figure.

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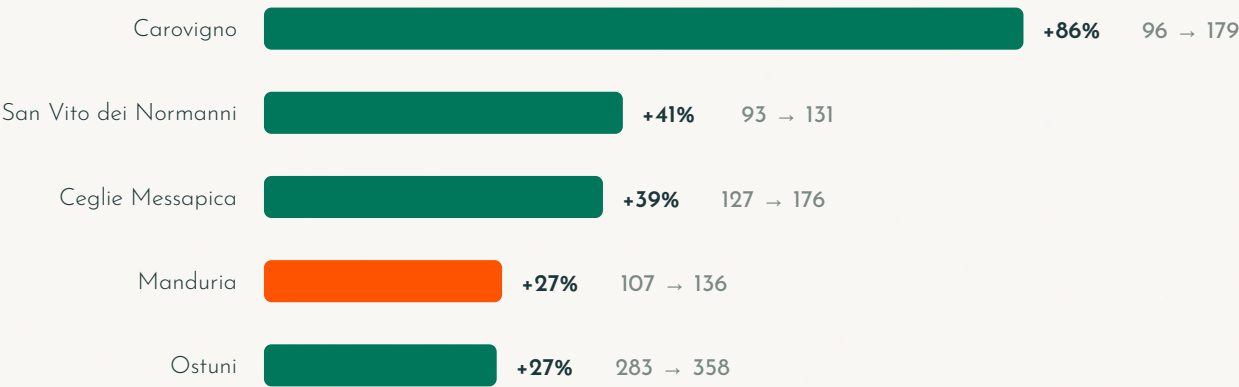
Town	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Ostuni	233	240	263	264	285	283	294	317	318	358
Carovigno	81	88	101	105	116	96	124	158	178	179
Ceglie Messapica	85	99	103	113	130	127	135	163	167	176
San Vito dei Normanni	97	99	95	99	105	93	113	123	126	131
Manduria	133	136	143	148	155	107	134	138	132	136
All 22 towns	842	891	936	980	1080	946	1049	1165	1209	1283

Why the answer changes depending on which year you start from

There is a step down in 2021, and it is not the same size everywhere: Ostuni lost 1%, Manduria lost 31%. We cannot tell from these records whether that is people leaving or registers being recalculated, and we are not going to pretend otherwise.

It matters, because it decides the headline. **Measured from 2016, the area grew 52% and Manduria grew 2%.** Measured from 2021, after the step, **the area grew 36% and Manduria grew 27%.** Same data, two different stories, and anyone quoting one without the other is choosing the one that suits them. The honest reading is that Manduria is growing, from a lower base, later than its neighbours.

Growth in western residents since the 2021 step, by town



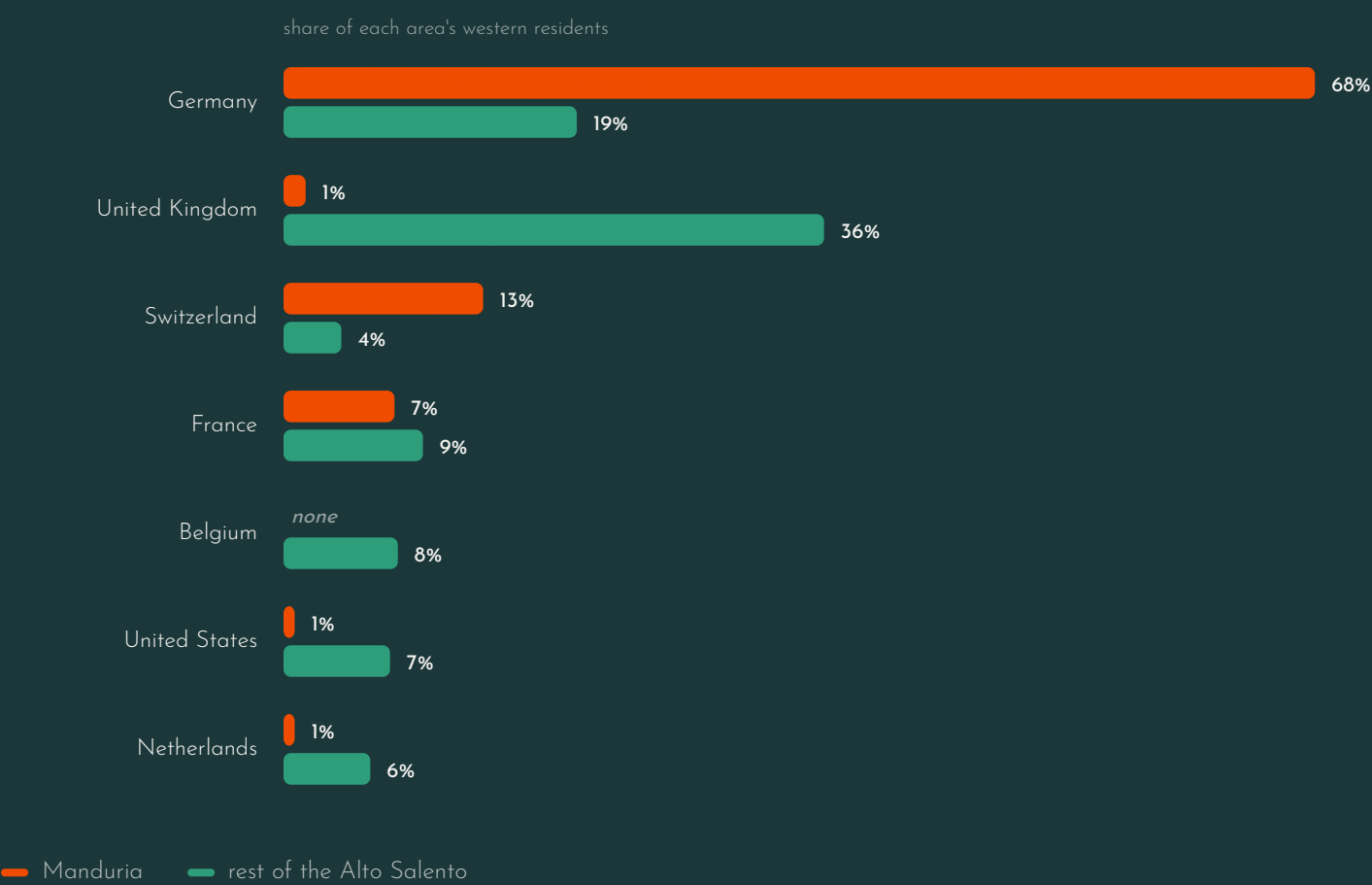
Source: Istat, resident population by citizenship, 1 January 2021 and 1 January 2025.

Manduria is the odd one out, and it is not British

Across the Alto Salento the largest western group is British: 413 people, a third of the total. Go to Ostuni, Carovigno, Ceglie Messapica, San Vito, Oria, Latiano, and the ranking is the same everywhere.

Then you reach Manduria and it inverts. **Ninety-three Germans and two Britons.** Add the Swiss and the Austrians and 85% of the town's western residents speak German, against 25% in the rest of the area. The only other town that shares the pattern is Avetrana, next door.

Share of each area's western residents, by nationality, 2025



Source: Istat, resident population by citizenship, 1 January 2025. Manduria n=136, rest of the area n=1,147.

What this means if you are thinking of coming here

01

You would not be alone.

More than twelve hundred people from western Europe and North America already live within half an hour of Manduria, and the number is growing by roughly a hundred a year. Whatever you need to ask, somebody nearby has already asked it.

02

But you would be early.

Manduria has 136 of those 1,283, while Ostuni has 358 in a town of the same size. The old town is still affordable for exactly that reason. Being early is the whole proposition, and it has a shelf life.

03

If you speak German, you have company you did not expect.

This is the only town in the area where the Germans outnumber everyone else, by a long way. Nobody planned it. It happened by word of mouth, and it is still happening.

04

The count almost certainly understates it.

These figures count people who transferred their legal residence. Anyone who bought a house and kept their residence abroad, which is common, is invisible here. The real number of international owners is higher than 136, and we cannot tell you by how much.

How we did this, so you can check it

The figures come from Istat, the Italian national statistics institute: resident population by citizenship, at 1 January of each year from 2016 to 2025, for each of the 22 municipalities of the Alto Salento. The files are public and anyone can download them and repeat the count.

“Western residents” means people holding the citizenship of a western European country, the United States, Canada, Australia or New Zealand. We excluded the rest of the foreign-resident population, which in these towns is mostly labour migration and answers a different question. In Manduria, for the record, there are 1,013 foreign residents in total and 136 in the group we counted.

We also run our own tracking of the international communities of Puglia: 535 identified foreign members across eleven groups, which is how we noticed the German pattern before we found it in the official data. That part is our own fieldwork and we do not publish the underlying records. Where the two disagree, the official figures are the ones quoted above.

What we cannot tell you is how many people own a house here without being registered as residents, why the 2021 step is so uneven, or how many of the Germans arrived recently rather than decades ago. When we know, we will say so.

Versione italiana, scritta per il paese: [Chi sono i nuovi residenti di Manduria](#)

THE PART THE NUMBERS CANNOT DO

A hundred and thirty-six people is a community only if they meet.

Most of them have never been in the same room. We started a group so that the person who just arrived can ask the person who arrived four years ago, in whatever language, and so that from 2027 there is a monthly aperitivo in the old town with an actual date on it. It is free, it sells nothing, and you do not have to live here yet to join.

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[WRITE TO MARIO](#)

Mario answers personally, usually the same day, in English or Italian. If you already live in the area and want to hear about what we organise, say so and we will keep you posted.

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