

CILENTO & AMALFI TREK

Trip code: Cilento & Amalfi Trek

15 days, start San Marco, end Positano.

Amended: July 2009

Valid from: 01 March 2012 – 31 Dec. 2012



HIGHLIGHTS

- Local-style agriturismo accommodation and small family run hotels - all with excellent Italian cuisine
- Completely unspoilt and rugged Cilento National Park with beautiful coastline and wild mountains
- Stunning Amalfi Coast, with the chance of a day trip to Pompeii or Capri
- Overnight stays in both mondaine Positano & Amalfi + rural atmosphere of the Agerola high plain
- A number of the world's finest walks – among which the famous 'Walk of the Gods'

SUMMARY

A two-week walking holiday covering the best of the Cilento National Park & the Amalfi Coast

The region of Campania marks the real beginnings of southern Italy. It has been sought-after since Roman times when it was tagged the Campania Felix or 'happy land'. Understandably when there is the great city of Naples, beautiful countryside, Roman sites, small islands and stretches of spectacular coast. On the southern side of the Sorrento Peninsula, the Costiera Amalfitana is probably one of Europe's most well-known and dramatic stretches of coastline, with its towering cliffs and picturesque coves.

South of Salerno, and immediately south of Paestum the coastline bulges out into an expanse of mountainous landmass known as Cilento, now a National Park with World Heritage listing. The Cilento coast is fairly rocky territory, with the shoreline lapped by a crystal sea. There is a wild kind of beauty here; rocky ridges set between small picturesque inlets and richly scented pinewoods backing onto wide sandy beaches. Aleppo pines loom over multicoloured undergrowth of myrtle and prickly pear; whilst huge, centuries old, olive trees grow right down to the shore. Inland the Cilento is largely undisturbed by the 21st century and we enjoy visiting mediaeval and quaint fishing villages where the traditional way of life is still evident. We stay in traditional accommodation and each day we venture into the undiscovered Cilento National Park, following mountain paths among olive groves, woodland glades with spectacular views of steep cliffs and deep valleys.

The Amalfi Coast is arguably the most impressive stretch of coastline in the Mediterranean, and includes the spectacular island of Capri, as well as the majestic Amalfi coast itself, with its precariously located hilltop villages, beautiful coastal towns and classic walking. The Amalfi also offers an extraordinary palette of colours with azure skies, white limestone cliffs, deep blue seas and bright citrus orchards, all lit by the dazzling Mediterranean sun. A web of ancient pathways winds along shoreline cliffs, leading from charming coastal towns through rustic woodlands and up to beautiful villages perched on craggy peaks. On this enchanting walking adventure, we go beyond the crowds to experience the hidden treasures and authentic culture of this Italian paradise. Highlights include a hike along the stunning 'Sentiero degli Dei' (Footpath of the Gods), the mysterious Valley of the Mills located just behind Amalfi, the spectacular village of Positano, a daytrip to the world famous Isle of Capri, where you'll see both the highlights and its hidden corners.

JOINING THE TRIP

(IN SAN MARCO DI CASTELLABATE)

Itinerary start

Your trip normally starts at our hotel in San Marco di Castellabate on the evening of Day 1 of the itinerary listed below. Details of how to reach the start point are given in the Final Joining Instructions. Hotel check-in times are normally from around 3pm. The nearest airport is Naples, the nearest railway station Agropoli. From both places private transfers can be arranged.

Low cost flights to Naples

There are many low cost airlines to Naples. While we cannot book low cost airlines, this may be a convenient and good value option for some clients. Please visit: <http://www.portal.gesac.it/portal/page/portal/internet/inVOLO/DestinazioniCompagnie/> for more information.

Transfer by train to San Marco di Castellabate

It is possible to reach the hotel using public transport from Naples main train station. From Naples airport, take the bus to the main train station and take the train to Agropoli (direction Sapri or Cosenza). There are regular buses from here to San Marco di Castellabate. See: www.trenitalia.com for up to date train times.

Full joining instructions including local emergency numbers will be sent to you as part of our Final Joining Instructions. If you do not receive these at least a week before departure, or require them earlier please contact our office or your travel agent.

LAND ONLY ITINERARY

*The entries in **bold** at the end of each day indicates the type of accommodation used and meals included (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner).*

Day 1 Start in San Marco, yet we recommend taking the group transfer from Naples (free of charge). If taking the transfer from the airport, then we enjoy a drive to the south, past Greek temples of Paestum, where we make a short stop before continuing onto San Marco, (a journey of about two hours). San Marco is a pretty coastal village, with a small harbour, just inside the Cilento National Park. We should have the rest of the afternoon to relax here or go for our first swim. **Hotel in Castellabate (D)**

Day 2 Staying on the coast, we start with a relatively easy introductory walk through sweet smelling maquis and past abandoned watchtowers to explore this beautiful shoreline. There will be an opportunity to cool off in the crystal clear waters. **Hotel in Castellabate (B)**

Day 3 After a short transfer to the medieval town of Perdifumo we start the days walking with a climb along the slopes of the Monte Stella with beautiful views towards Cape Palinuro and the Gulf of Salerno. Passing through the maquis and bare rocks the scenery changes into thick chestnut forests. We pass the historical 'Castelluccio', an abandoned fortress, before reaching the top of Mt Stella. From here we walk down to the mediaeval village of Galdo, and then to Acciaroli, a lovely fisherman village, where Hemingway liked to stay. **Hotel in Castellabate (B)**

Day 4 Today we transfer inland to the heart of the Cilento National Park. We will be dropped off in Magliano, a small medieval town underneath the towering mountains of the Chianello. Passing medieval chapels we cross the ridge, from where we have marvellous views, both inland and over the sea towards the Amalfi Coast. Then we descend to the beautiful gorge of the River Calore. Through the gorge, one of the most pristine nature areas of the region, we walk to the little town of Felitto, from where the bus brings us to Piaggine, a nice little village at the footslopes of Mount Cervati. **Hotel in Piaggine (B,D)**

Day 5 From our base in Piaggine we walk through to Valle dell'Angelo to the historical town of Laurino (optional visit of the town centre) and then we climb into one of the most unspoilt parts of the Cilento. After crossing a medieval bridge the path starts to climb and reaches a high plain. From here it's a short walk to the Grava di Vesalo, an impressive karst sinkhole, which sees a stream disappearing into the ground. We return on a medieval mule track with some of the most impressive viewpoints of the area stopping for a well-deserved cold drink in Valle dell'Angelo on our way to Piaggine. **Hotel in Piaggine (B,D)**

Day 6 Today's walk will lead us through several villages, all virtually untouched. From Piaggine there is a short transfer through hilly countryside to Sacco, with its beautiful church and town centre. From here the track leads down to the sources of the river Sammaro inside a grotto. After crossing the bridge we climb up to Roscigno vecchio, an abandoned village virtually untouched by the 20th century. A long climb then takes us up to the new village of Roscigno and then to the Monte Pruno. The descent, with beautiful views takes us to Corleto Monforte and then to Sant'Angelo, where we sleep in a beautifully located agriturismo. **Agriturismo in Sant'Angelo (B,D)**

Day 7 Today we first walk through the old town centre towards the grotto of St. Michael, one of the most beautiful cave churches in the area. After the visit we follow ancient shepherds tracks up onto the high plain where we visit the prehistoric 'stone warrior' of Sant'Angelo; a pleasant walk through beech forest and agricultural land, to one of the most intriguing sites of the area. After a picnic lunch we walk back to our agriturismo. **Agriturismo in Sant'Angelo (B,D)**

Day 8 In the morning we transfer up to the high plains for a fantastic day trek. First we walk through mountain meadows and beech forest, passing along several sink holes and other karst features. We have lunch on a mountain meadow, and after lunch we walk to the very edge of the mountain massive: a sheer drop of several hundred metres. For the adventurous amongst us there is a good scramble to the very top of the Il Figliolo a stunning lookout point over Petina and the surrounding area. Along an easy medieval mule track we descend to the charming village of Petina. **Hotel in Petina (B,D)**

Day 9 After the impressive nature, today's walk will lead you along the cultural features of the Alburni Mountain. We will stroll through the chestnut forest on the northern slopes of the mountains and visit some of the medieval villages, like Sicignano, with its castle dominating the plain. We return early in the afternoon. There is

time to relax in Petina or make an optional visit to the nearby caves of Pertosa. **Hotel in Petina (B,D)**

Day 10 Today we leave the Cilento behind and transfer by bus to the Amalfi Coast, via the town of Salerno (and perhaps the caves of Pertosa). We will be dropped off at the medieval castle of Salerno, dominating the city and the whole coast from a hill above the city. From here we walk down to the city centre and then break our journey in Salerno with free time to have lunch and maybe visit the beautiful Duomo before we continue on to the Amalfi coast in the late afternoon, enjoying a great boat ride. Our first base is the city of Amalfi itself and our hotel is in the very centre, at only a few metres from the sea shore, so there is ample time to explore or just enjoy the beach. **Hotel in Amalfi (B)**

Day 11 Directly from our hotel in Amalfi, we climb to the little village of Pontone, walking through lush lemon groves and shady forest. The main point of interest is the marvellous Torre dello Zirro, from where we enjoy dramatic views over both Amalfi and Atrani. Then we walk back to Pontone, a charming little village, with some time to relax. From here we walk then down into the famous 'Valle dei Mulini', the valley of the watermills, an almost fairy tale like landscape with its ruins of Europe's most ancient paper fabrics, dating back to the 11th century. From here a beautiful medieval mule track brings you back down to Amalfi, amidst lemon groves and maquis. An optional extension can also bring us to Ravello, one of the most beautiful spots on the coast where you can visit the stunning Cimbrone villa located high on a cliff. **Hotel in Amalfi (B)**

Day 12 After a short transfer by bus to Scala, the oldest village of the Amalfi Coast, we walk along a beautiful panoramic footpath into the wild nature of the 'Ferriere' valley. We walk through the maquis and thick woods, where we can admire waterfalls and all varieties of ferns before reaching our second base on the Amalfi Coast on the high plain of Agerola, just inland from the coast, with superb views and excellent connections to all the coastal walks, and a charming region in itself. **Hotel in Agerola (B,D)**

Day 13 Today we travel down by private bus to visit the world famous ruins of Pompeii. In the afternoon we travel on to the nearby Mt. Vesuvius and make a beautiful roundwalk over the top here (several options). **Hotel in Agerola (B,D)**

Day 14 Our final day of walking on the Amalfi Coast is an acknowledged classic. We walk or take a short bus journey to our start point in Bomerano. We then descend on panoramic footpaths, passing remote hamlets and vast caves through spectacular scenery with bizarre rock formations and luxuriant vegetation, to reach the famous 'Sentiero degli Dei', or the 'Footpath of the Gods'. This stunning path takes us through wild nature, past the little hamlets of Nocelle and Montepertuso down to the village of Positano, with its houses built on the mountain edges. Our hotel is right in the historical centre and close to the beach. **Hotel in Positano (B)**

Day 15 Our final day is dedicated to the rightly famous Isle of Capri - a place where Roman emperors used to come as tourists! We travel by boat to Capri, following the beautiful coastline and passing the islands of the mythical sirens, mentioned in Homer's 'Odyssey'. In Capri we do not only see the popular sights, but also enjoy a beautiful round walk that takes us past a continuous stream of natural and cultural highlights, like Villa Jovis (once home to the Emperor Tiberius), a natural bridge, a monastery and the charming village of Capri itself. The walk then follows the untouched coastline and passes many grottos. Late in the afternoon we travel back to Positano. Some time to relax on the beach of Positano makes a perfect end of the holiday. **Hotel in Positano (B)**

Day 15 The trip ends in Positano after breakfast. **(B)**

ACCOMMODATION, FOOD & TRANSPORT

Accommodation

Agriturismo's are usually very good small-scale accommodations in rural locations, mostly renovated farmhouses, locally owned and run. Hotel accommodation is in 3 star establishments. All rooms have en-suite facilities.

Single Accommodation

A limited number of single rooms are available. All accommodations cannot guarantee single rooms due to their size.

Extra Accommodation

We can arrange extra accommodation for before or after your trip (subject to availability) in Naples.

Food

All breakfasts and 14 dinners are included. Wine, drinks and coffee are usually not included with dinners. In the itinerary we state which meals are included on which day.

Breakfast: Usually continental style, with various extras to the coffee, tea, bread, jam and honey.

Dinner: Dominated by Mediterranean flavours like pasta with rich tomato sauces, all kind of herbs, olive oil, locally produced (mozzarella) cheese, salami and a wide choice of fresh vegetables. They combine an excellent variety of seafood and meat for the perfect taste of Southern Italy.

Vegetarian choices are always available - please advise our sales team upon booking.

Transport

We use a private minibus or coach for most transfers, and where appropriate we may use public buses or ferries. Due to local transport costs constantly changing, and the impossibility to book tickets ahead local transport costs are paid locally – please allow about €15,00 per person.

WEATHER

Southern Italy possesses a hot, dry climate in summer, with cooler but slightly damper spring and autumn periods, and at coastal levels mild, damp winters. Rainfall is most expected in winter months with an average of one day in three affected. Unseasonable cold spells are possible at any time of year, during which time you will need warm clothes, especially in Bomerano where evening temperatures can be lower than expected. It is very **important** to be equipped for cooler weather in early spring, late autumn and the winter.

IS THIS TRIP FOR YOU?

As the Cilento area is newly discovered for walking, many of the trails are newly opened, and paths may be rather overgrown in places. Distances vary from 12kms to 16kms per day, which should equate to 5-6 hours. Height gain and loss can vary from 400 meters to 850 meters. Trails in the Amalfi region are much better maintained than in the Cilento area and distances will be similar.

RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

Tourism can be a real help to local communities, providing income, positive cultural exchanges and a financial incentive to protect their natural environment and maintain their cultural heritage.

Our trips are designed to allow a high degree of economic benefit to the local communities; we buy local produce, eat local food and

use local services, thus ensuring that as much money as possible is retained within the local economies and the host communities. With our responsible tourism policy we are continually reassessing our holidays, trying at all times to ensure that they are socially, economically and environmentally sound.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Passports and Visas

All nationalities require a full passport that must be valid for 6 months beyond the intended length of stay. *However, some EU nationals may travel to Italy using only an EU identity card. If you think this may apply to you please check with your local authorities.* It is your responsibility to have the correct personal documents and to obtain your own visa, if one is necessary, in accordance with the regulations of the country you are to visit.

Visa regulations can and do change without notice and if you are not a British passport holder please check the current regulations in good time to obtain a visa if one is required.

Vaccinations and Health

Italy has a modern health system, with usually free first-aid assistance in all areas. No vaccinations are needed. Please consult your doctor for up-to-date information.

Insurance

It is a condition of joining any of our holidays that you must be insured against medical and personal accident risks (to include repatriation costs, air ambulance and helicopter rescue services). Your policy must cover you for any activities that are part of this trip or optional activities that you intend to take part in (e.g. Walking/Climbing at altitude, Scuba-diving etc).

TIME ZONE

Local Time is GMT +1hrs

MONEY MATTERS

Currency Information

Currency in Italy is Euro (€).

ATM availability

Cash points are available in Naples and all major towns visited. Major credit cards are accepted in most places, cash is usually easier.

Extra Expenses and Spending Money

Please allow for lunches and dinners not included, optional entrance fees (about € 20,00) and for public transport costs. Optional excursions from Agerola will be confirmed locally, but €50 should be enough to cover this.

WHAT TO TAKE

Essential Equipment and Clothing

Walking boots (with ankle support if you usually have these); waterproof jacket (trousers and gaiters optional); fleece; day pack for picnic lunch / water bottles; sunhat and sun cream. We also recommend: walking poles for those who usually use these.

A GPS can be a nice toy and sometimes useful.