

*Independent 'self guided' walking journey*

# The Heart of the Amalfi Coast & the Sorrento Peninsula

**Amalfi & Ravello, *'Sentiero degli Dei'*, Positano,  
Sorrento & Punta Campanella  
(with an optional extension to Capri)**

**9-day walking tour with 4 different bases in charming hotels  
and a beautiful agriturismo**



**Spring/Autumn 2010**

**Local Organizer:** Genius Loci Travel – Salerno (Italy)

**Season:** March – end July + end August - end October

**Level:** 2, easy to moderate (reasonable fitness required, easy paths, no technical difficulties)

Several shorter/longer options available each day – clients choose own difficulty.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Sorrento Peninsula has been a tourist destination for centuries, at least since the days of the Grand Tour and perhaps even since the days of the Roman Empire. In Victorian times Sorrento became a corner of paradise for many north Europeans, drawn by the bright Mediterranean sunshine and the dramatic fusion of mountains and sea, to forget the cold winter back home. Today Sorrento still exudes the same charm and elegance of that times, in its wonderful location looking across the Bay of Naples, with Mount Vesuvius in the background. Its historical centre is definitely worth a prolonged visit and the immediate surroundings offer many possibilities for great walks.

Our Amalfi-Sorrento tour rewards you with fantastic panoramas, which change with every twist of the path, as you walk around the tip of the peninsula. You'll enjoy the most spectacular scenery of the Amalfi Coast and have great views on the mythical 'Siren Islands', the nearby island of Capri, and across the Bay of Naples to Ischia, Procida, Naples and of course Mount Vesuvius, dominating the Bay of Naples. Behind you are the Lattari mountains plunging into the sea, and on many occasions you have the views over both the Bay of Naples and the Gulf of Salerno, the 'Due Golfi'.

This walking tour is a wonderful discovery of the western part of the Sorrento Peninsula, with some amazing stretches of unspoilt coastline, Punta Campanella, the *Land's End* of the area, and of course Sorrento and its surroundings. And it includes also the most interesting parts of the Amalfi Coast, probably Italy's most beautiful coastline, like the historical villages of Amalfi, Ravello & Positano and the famous "*Sentiero degli Dei*"- the "*Pathway of the Gods*".

This walking tour is the perfect choice for those who want to see both sides of the Peninsula. It takes in some of the most beautiful walks to be made in the area, some of which listed among the '*world's best walks*'. It shows you both the wonders of the Amalfi Coast, touching all the famous coastal villages, as well as the best parts of the Sorrento-side of the Peninsula, totally different, but equally beautiful.

You will walk along well maintained footpaths, often paved alleyways, through attractive countryside, with wonderful terraced lemon groves, vineyards and cultural treasures like rural chapels, ancient farm houses, old water mills and wonderful villa's and villages, where you can sit down and relax with a drink.

You'll have the time to visit the villages which are a must to see: Amalfi itself, but also Atrani, wonderfully preserved through the centuries, Ravello with its magnificent villa's and of course the scenic and fashionable Positano.

And it gives you the opportunity to do some 'touristy' excursions, like the world famous excavations at Pompeii, or the island of Capri.

*Please note: this is a moderately easy tour which is suitable for those who have some experience with walking and a good general physical condition. Most of the walks are on good paths, some of them just recently restored by the local authorities. Part of the paths is waymarked. Elsewhere it is necessary to follow the route notes provided together with the maps.*

*Average walking times: approx from 4 - 5 hours each day (several longer & shorter options available).*

## DAY-TO-DAY PROGRAMME

### Day 1

Arrival in Naples (airport) or Salerno (train station). You are met by a taxi (optional) and brought to your hotel in Amalfi. Short visit to the town centre and maybe a swim to wash off the tiredness of the journey.

**Hotel \*\*\* - Amalfi**

### Day 2

Today you make a first easy walk, which gives you immediately a good idea of the amazing cultural and natural heritage of the Amalfi Coast. First you walk into the quiet little back alleys of Amalfi, where you still notice the strong Moorish influence. An ancient staircase takes you up underneath the impressive limestone cliffs, towards the little village of Pontone, part of the medieval defence system of the city of Amalfi. The main point of interest is the marvellous Torre dello Zirro, located on a narrow ridge, in a park like landscape, with unforgettable views of Amalfi to the one and Atrani to the other side. This area offers also a number of marvellous picnic places, all with dramatic views. Then, through the charming village of Pontone itself, you walk into the *'Valle dei Mulini'*, the valley of the watermills, with the ruins of Europe's most ancient paper mills, dating back to the 11th century. The comfortable footpath runs along the river course, in an abundant green, almost un-Italian, landscape. Those who want can penetrate deep into the valley, through spectacular scenery, underneath the towering cliffs, through an almost fairy tale like landscape. Here you can admire a number of beautiful waterfalls. Then you return back down to Amalfi. The path gradually descends along a number of impressive ruins of what once were the first paper mills, adding a mysterious touch to the landscape. Along the last stretch the scenery changes to lemon groves and *maquis*. Back down in Amalfi you can pass at the paper museum, before returning to your hotel. As the walk is relatively short you now still have some time to wander around in Amalfi or take your time for a swim.

**Hotel \*\*\* - Amalfi**

*Distance: 9-10 km. Approx. 4-5 h. walking*

### Day 3

Today you first take a local (open) bus up to the small village of Bomerano, on the Agerola high plain. Here is the beginning of the famous *'Sentiero degli Dei'* ('Footpath of the Gods'), one of Italy's most famous footpaths, and certainly a walk with unrivalled views. After a very panoramic stretch with views over the whole Amalfi Coast, reaching out until the island of Capri, you reach the junction for the monastery of San Domenico, set in a stupendous scenery, dominating the coast from its hilltop (optional detour along a medieval pilgrims' route). You then continue more or less level, through spectacular scenery with bizarre rock formations and luxurious vegetation. Here the *'Sentiero degli Dei'* really lives up to its name! Through unique scenery with unrivalled views you reach the hamlet of Nocelle. Passing another spectacular valley you arrive in the little village of Montepertuso. After Montepertuso it's only a short walk downstairs to Positano, but it will take you some time as there are too many photo opportunities along the route. Positano itself, is considered to be one of Italy's most beautiful villages, and certainly one of the pearls of the Amalfi Coast. After a stroll through its alleys, you settle in your hotel in the centre, at walking distance from the large beach.

**Hotel \*\*\* /\*\*\*\* – Positano**

*Distance: 9 km. Approx. 4,5 h. walking*

### Day 4

First you take the local bus up to Montepertuso, from where you start a very scenic walk, around the upper valley of Positano. Following ancient footpaths through the forest and along marvelous viewpoints you climb up towards Santa Maria al Castello, the old fortress defending the narrow valley between the Amalfi- and Sorrento-side of the peninsula. From here you can admire both the Gulf of Salerno and the Bay of Naples. Through a nice wooded area in a park like landscape you then descend to the Caserma Forestale (the forestry service's house). For those who want there is the possibility to climb up from here to the Monte Sant'Angelo, the highest mountain of the peninsula, a very demanding but rewarding ascent. The standard walk though continues through the forest and zigzags back down to Montepertuso. Along another medieval mule track you then return to Positano again.

**Hotel \*\*\* /\*\*\*\* – Positano**

*Distance: 11 km. Approx. 4,5 h. walking*

### **Day 5**

After breakfast you can either choose to take a local bus (optional taxi) or make the walk from Positano to the Colli di Fontanelle. This route partly follows the long distance trail '*Alta Via dei Monti Lattari*', and passes along the fortified church of Santa Maria al Castello, Monte Comune, the 'sailors' beacon' Monte Vico Alvano and the Colli of San Pietro. From the Colli di Fontanelle you take a little path which runs parallel to the seashore with spectacular views. After a while the path descends quite steeply and then continues through olive groves towards the little hamlet of Torca. From here along well maintained paths you descend to Marina di Crapolla (where Saint Peter landed) where you can have a swim. Then climb back up and settle in your beautiful agriturismo in the middle of the orchards, where you will have a great meal of local organic produce tonight.

**Agriturismo \*\*\* – Sant'Agata sui Due Golfi**

### **Day 6**

Today's walk brings you to Punta Campanella, the *Finis Terrae* or Land's End of the Sorrento peninsula, where you are face to face with the island of Capri. You can either opt to follow the *Alta Via dei Monti Lattari* all the way to there, right from your agriturismo, or you can opt to take a local bus to Termini, the last village before the headland. From here you follow the medieval stairs up to the small church of San Costanzo, from where you have views of 360°, over both the Bay of Naples and the Amalfi Coast. A spectacular path, running along the impressive cliffs of the headland, then brings you to the tip of the peninsula, where according to the legend Ulisses erected a temple in the honour of Athena. In some parts the path is a bit demanding, but never tough. The return, between Punta Campanella and Termini is on a very comfortable path, the old Roman Via Minerva, with great views on Capri and a number of medieval watchtowers, which once protected the coast. From Termini you then take the local bus back to Sant'Agata, to dine another night in your agriturismo.

**Agriturismo \*\*\* – Sant'Agata sui Due Golfi**

### **Day 7**

Today you have several options to walk down to Sorrento, according to your desire to walk and the time you want to dedicate to shopping and sightseeing in Sorrento. A beautiful route goes to the nice historic village of Massalubrense, and through several charming small hamlets within the same municipality, all surrounded by wonderful olive & lemon groves. An optional detour brings you to the castle from where Napoleon's general followed the siege of Capri. A shorter route brings you along the village of Sant'Agata directly down to Sorrento. Whatever way you choose, you will enter Sorrento from a great viewpoint, from where all the painters over the centuries have depicted Sorrento, and made its fame. There is some time to stroll through the centre and perhaps admire the Bay of Naples from one of the great panoramic terraces, before you settle in your centrally located hotel. Your luggage is already there.

**Hotel \*\*\*/\*\*\*\* – Sorrento**

### **Day 8**

From Sorrento you can undertake several interesting excursions: a day-trip to the island of Capri, or a visit to Pompeii. There are also several nice options for an easy roundwalk, and perhaps a swim. A beautiful walk brings you to Capo di Sorrento, and from there down to the great Roman Villa on the headland. This was also the favourite bathing place of Queen Giovanna, a beautiful small bay. According to your desire to extend the walk you can reach the small fishing village of Marina di Puolo, before returning to Sorrento. There is some time to stroll through the centre and perhaps admire the Bay of Naples from one of the great panoramic terraces, before you settle in your centrally located hotel. Your luggage is already there.

**Hotel \*\*\*/\*\*\*\* – Sorrento**

### **Day 9**

After breakfast you return by train, bus or boat to Naples (airport).

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# TOUR DETAILS

## ACCOMMODATION & MEALS

All nights are spent in beautiful, characteristic family-run hotels (generally 3/4-star; 5-star on request). All rooms have en-suite facilities.

Accommodation is on **B&B** basis, in most accommodations. Only on the first night in the agriturismo in Sant'Agata you are on **HB** basis. Where no evening meals are included, you are free to choose from the wide choice of restaurants in the area. Your accommodation holder can give you good tips. On some occasions you can also choose to eat at the premises of the hotel.

No picnic lunches are included in the tour price, but these can be prepared for you by the accommodation holders, or materials for picnics can be purchased in the villages where you stay. On some occasions you have the option to have your lunch in a restaurant along the way.

**Nights 1 & 2:** The first two nights are spent at Amalfi, the ancient capital of the Amalfi Coast, either in a welcoming and comfortable 3-star hotel, or in a small charming family run hotel right on the (private) beach. All hotels are at walking distance from the seashore and all main monuments of the medieval town centre.

**Nights 3 & 4:** The next two nights are spent in the romantic & fashionable little village of Positano, with its characteristic houses built onto the steep slopes of the mountains. You stay either in a comfortable 3-star hotel, or in a bigger 4-star hotel. All hotels are at walking distance from the seashore (along Positano's charming little streets/stairs).

**Nights 5 & 6:** These two nights are spent near the small village of Sant'Agata sui Due Golfi, on the high plain dominating both the Bay of Naples, as well as the Gulf of Salerno and the Amalfi Coast, in a beautiful agriturismo.

**Nights 7 & 8:** The last two nights are spent in beautiful Sorrento, with its charming historical centre and great parks and terraces overlooking the Bay of Naples. You stay either in a comfortable 3-star hotel, or in a beautiful 4-star hotel. All hotels are located in the historical centre and at walking distance from the train station and harbour.

## LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

**Moderately easy** (2-3): Mostly easy walks, but with nonetheless some walking uphill, sometimes on paths with rough surfaces. On most days extensions or shortcuts are possible.

**Fitness:** High standard of fitness is not necessary but clients should be able to walk for up to 5 hours a day in hot sun on dusty or stony tracks.

## FOOT PATHS & WAYMARKING

Most paths are relatively well maintained, but during the season some paths can get overgrown (*we are in continuous contact with local authorities to keep the paths clean – please help us by providing you feedback on the quality of the paths*).

**Waymarking:** Only a small part of the route is waymarked (partly by us); elsewhere it is necessary to follow the route descriptions provided together with the maps. With these it is always possible to find your route. In case you don't feel confident a local guide can be provided for some trails.

## **ON INDIVIDUAL SELF-GUIDED WALKING TOURS WE PROVIDE YOU WITH :**

- Extensive route notes, with description of the route & tourist information
- Maps at 1 : 25.000 scale
- 24/24 h local assistance
- Luggage transport
- Private transfers as specified

## **ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE**

**Arrival:** The tour starts in POSITANO, connected with Salerno by a frequent bus (and boat) service and with Naples/Sorrento by frequent train/bus service. In Summer there are direct boats from Naples. A taxi pick-up service can be arranged either from Naples (airport or train station), or from Pompeii or Castellammare di Stabia, which can both be easily reached from Naples, with the local Circumvesuviana train.

**Departure:** The tour ends after breakfast on day 11 in Sorrento. A frequent train service can bring you to Naples, while a frequent bus service can bring you directly to either Naples airport. Another frequent bus service can bring you to Amalfi/Salerno. Several taxi services are available to bring you directly to your next destination.

## **EXTRA NIGHTS**

It is possible to include extra nights in any of the accommodations en route. *Extra walking or sightseeing options will be provided !!!*

At the beginning or the end of the tour there is also an opportunity to visit Naples and/or Pompeii. The tour can easily be extended with a few days in Naples or on the island of Capri (see below). Several good accommodations are available. Details and prices on request.



## SHORTER & LONGER VERSIONS

A longer, 10-day version of this tour is also available, as well as 11- and 12-day versions.

A shorter, 6-day version of this tour is also available. Prices on request.

## EXTENSIONS

### Possible extension n.° 1 : CAPRI

Several hotels in Capri/Anacapri can be booked as an extension to your tour. There are many direct boats and hydrofoils from Sorrento to Capri. The program would then be as follows:

#### Day 9

Today you travel by boat to the rightly famous island of Capri, the island where already the roman emperors liked to come as tourists, and that since then never lost its fame. Upon arrival in the harbour you leave your luggage to the 'porters' and start a beautiful roundwalk. Of course you do not only see the 'touristy' highlights, but you also walk along wonderful foot paths, passing the ruins of the island's most impressive roman villa, an untouched coastline and many grotto's. Along the world famous Via Krupp, you then descend to Marina Piccola, with perhaps the option for a swim, before settling in your hotel. This walk can be extended or shortened in many ways, according to your wish to dedicate to walking, relaxing or shopping. In the evening you'll have the choice of many romantic restaurants in the village.

#### Hotel \*\*\* - Capri.

Distance: 8 km. Approx. 4 h. walking

#### Day 10

The last walking day is dedicated to the less famous side of the island of Capri, the more rural and mountainous Anacapri. By chair lift (*funicolare*) you travel up to the highest mountain of the island, the Mount Solaro (but also walking is possible). From here you can enjoy marvellous views over the whole island, the Bay of Naples, the Bay of Salerno and the Amalfi Coast. Descending along the ridge you slowly walk down a great foot path to the light house at the very west end of the island. Here you can perhaps enjoy the clear sea water. The walk then continues along the coast, passing along a series of fortresses, partly built by the English troops to defend the island from the fleet of Napoleon, on recently restored. The walk ends at the world famous 'Blue Grotto' (the 'Grotta Azzurra'), from where you travel back by bus to your hotel. **Hotel \*\*\* - Capri.**

Distance: 8 km. Approx. 4 h. walking

#### Day 11

After breakfast you return by boat to Naples and by shuttle bus to the airport. An extra night in a hotel can be booked upon request.

### Possible extension n.° 2 : CAPRI from SORRENTO

To visit Capri only briefly it is also possible to book an extra night in Sorrento. You can easily make a day-excursion to Capri, as there are many direct boats and hydrofoils from Sorrento.

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