

Independent 'self guided' walking journey

Around the *Finis Terrae* of the Sorrento Peninsula

**Sorrento, Massalubrense & Punta Campanella
(with an optional extension to Capri)**

**9-day walking tour with 4 different bases in charming hotels,
a convent 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.

On this beautiful Sorrento tour you will be rewarded 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 western part 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. 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 best parts of the Sorrento-side of the Peninsula, totally different from the Amalfi Coast, but equally beautiful.

You will walk along well maintained footpaths, often paved alleyways, through attractive countryside, with wonderful terraced olive & 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.

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 beautiful agriturismo on the ridge between the Bay of Naples and the Gulf of Salerno, 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 2

Today you’ll make a roundwalk over the ridge dividing the Bay of Naples from the Gulf of Salerno, discovering the very different landscapes and a number of charming small hamlets. Through pinewood, olive grove and orchards you reach the charming small hamlet of Colli di Fontanelle. An optional detour brings you to the Colle Sant’Angelo, a great viewpoint overlooking the whole plain of Sorrento & Bay of Naples. Then you walk back along the southern side of the ridge, now fully immersed in the Mediterranean colours and the lovely smells of the Mediterranean herbs. The path runs parallel to the seashore with spectacular views over the ‘Islands of the Sirens’. Then the path descends quite steeply and continues through olive groves towards the little hamlets of Monticelli and Torca. From here along well maintained paths you descend to the very picturesque inlet of Marina di Crapolla (where according to the legend Saint Peter landed on his travel towards Rome). Here you can have a swim, before returning to Torca. From Torca you then walk back up to your agriturismo, to dine another night on local delicacies.

Agriturismo * – Sant’Agata sui Due Golfi**

Day 3

Today’s walk brings you to the charming little seashore village of Marina del Cantone, on the south side of the Sorrento Peninsula. First you walk back down to Torca, and from there you follow the long distance path ‘*Alta Via dei Monti Lattari*’, all along the coast. The landscape is spectacular, you walk in a beautiful landscape, dominated by dry-stone walls and olive groves, all the time overlooking the sea. In the afternoon you reach the beautiful small bay of Recommone, where you can perhaps already opt for a swim. The last stretch to Marina del Cantone is a great walk, past the ruins of a medieval watchtower, over the rocky headland, you reach the seashore hamlet of Marina del Cantone. Here you settle in a good family-run 3-star hotel. Your luggage is already there.

Hotel */**** – Marina del Cantone**

Day 4

In case you want to spend one more night in Marina del Cantone, you can make a great roundwalk to one of the core areas of the marine nature protection area of Punta Campanella. This walk brings you through the beautiful small village of Nerano, dominated by the sheer cliffs of the headland. From here you make a great, at first almost level walk to the watchtower on the headland of Punta Penna, overlooking the beautiful Baia di Ieranto, now managed by the Italian ‘National Trust’ (FAI). You can make a roundwalk here and perhaps go for a swim, before returning along the same route to Marina del Cantone.

Hotel */**** – Marina del Cantone**

Day 5

Today you walk from Marina del Cantone, on the southern side of the Sorrento Peninsula to Marina della Lobra, another picturesque fishing harbour, on the northern side of the Peninsula. But first you pass at 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 Marina del Cantone, 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 Ulysses 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 to Massalubrense (unless you want to walk the whole way), where you will stay for two nights on a great location, a restored convent, right in the heart of Marina della Lobra, at walking distance from the harbour and seashore. For dinner tonight, you have the choice between a number of good restaurants and agriturismo's.

Convento – Marina del Cantone

Day 6

Starting from Marina della Lobra you make a great roundwalk today, with ever changing views. First you walk up to the church of san Liberatore, from where views on Capri and the Bay of Naples are grand, to say the least. Then you walk up, along a beautiful route through the olive and lemon groves, to the castle from where Napoleon's general Murat followed the siege of Capri. From here you can opt to walk to Termini, and then along the ridge back. A shorter route brings you along the hamlet of Santa Maria to the nice historic village of Massalubrense. You walk all the way through its historical heart and have the time to look around perhaps have a drink overlooking the Bay of Naples. Then you descend back to Marina della Lobra, with still some time to relax or perhaps go for a swim.

Convento – Marina del Cantone

Day 7

Today you can walk all the way to Sorrento (according to your desire to walk and the time you want to dedicate to shopping and sightseeing in Sorrento; there are also frequent local buses. A beautiful route through the olive and lemon groves brings you up to the village of Massalubrense. Here you can buy your picnic supplies and perhaps drink a good espresso, before starting the real walk. Then you continue your route, now more or less level, contouring the hills above Sorrento. You then reach a wonderful viewpoint, from where all the painters over the centuries have depicted Sorrento, and made its fame. From here you descend down to the plain of 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 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/agriturismo.

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 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 3 & 4: The next two nights are spent in the romantic & fashionable little sea shore village of Marina del Cantone, with its large beach and many good restaurants. You stay either in a comfortable 3-star hotel, or (on request) in a 4-star hotel. All hotels are at walking distance from the seashore.

Nights 5 & 6: These two nights are spent in a beautiful convent in the small fishing village of Marina della Lobra, near Massalubrense. On request you can as well opt for a 3-star hotel. Both are only a few steps away from the seashore. Many good restaurants and agriturismo's are at walking distance.

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 SANT'AGATA SUI DUE GOLFI, connected with Sorrento by A frequent bus service. A taxi pick-up service can be arranged either from Naples (airport or train station), or from Sorrento, 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 9 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.º 2 : CAPRI from SORRENTO

To visit Capri only briefly it is also possible to book an extra night in Sorrento, as there are many direct boats and hydrofoils from Sorrento to Capri. The program would then be as follows:

Day 9

Today you make a short stroll down to the harbor and 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. Of course you do not only see the 'touristy' highlights, but you also make a beautiful round walk, passing the ruins of Villa Iovis, the most impressive roman villa, the untouched coastline and many grotto's. This walk can be extended or shortened in many ways, according to your wish to dedicate to walking, relaxing or shopping. In the late afternoon you return by boat to Sorrento.

Hotel */**** – Sorrento**

Distance: 8 km. Approx. 4 h. walking

Day 10

After breakfast you return by boat or bus and train to Naples (airport). An extra night in a hotel can be booked upon request.