



GENIUS LOCI TRAVEL
Walking and Cycling Holidays

Independent 'Self Guided' walking tour

Jewels of the Bay of Naples

Capri, Ischia & Procida: exploring the three islands of the world's most beautiful bay



TRIP NOTES 2020

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****GENIUS LOCI TRAVEL - The Real Spirit Of Italy****



INTRODUCTION

The Bay of Naples is one of the most spectacular areas on the planet, with a tremendous wealth of both natural and cultural treasures. It presents beautiful diverse landscapes and an amazing amount of history. The blue waters of the Mediterranean are dominated here by the world's most famous volcano, Mount Vesuvius (Italian: Vesuvio), the only volcano on the European mainland to have erupted within the last hundred years.

A unique part of the charm of the Bay of Naples can be found on its three main islands, all different, all beautiful. During this tour you'll visit all three: Capri of course, the most famous, but also Ischia and Procida.

You start your tour on the smallest and least known island: Procida. Just like its big neighbour Ischia, Procida is of volcanic origin. Its beauty lies in its coloured houses and picturesque inlets, which was the setting for the film 'Il Postino'. The little uninhabited island of Vivara, linked to Procida by a pedestrian bridge, is another of the hidden gems that Procida has managed to keep from the attention of mass tourism.

Next you travel on to the largest of the three: Ischia. Known as the 'green island', with mountains rising up over 2000 feet, it has been famous for its almost subtropical climate and thermal spas since Roman times. Here you make a number of beautiful and varied walks: from the medieval castle to cave dwellings, through forests and along deserted beaches, through nice historic villages and amazing terraced vineyards. You can also walk across a number of extinct volcanoes.

You then travel on to the world-famous island of Capri, the last stop on this tour. Capri, unlike the other two islands, is made of chalkstone, just like its natural continuation: the cliffs of the Amalfi Coast. This makes up for its particular features, such as the world-famous 'Faraglioni', its natural arch and its impressive cliffs. But if you wish you can also visit its amazing Roman villas and indulge in its fashionable 'dolce vita' too.

The premises where you'll be staying during this tour are all very special, and full of historical interest. The standard of the tour is 3 stars. Both upgrades and cheaper versions are available.



Please note: this is a moderately easy tour, suitable for those who have some experience of walking and a good general physical condition. Most of the walks are on good paths, parts of them waymarked. Elsewhere you have to follow the route notes provided together with the maps. Average walking times: from approx. 4 to 5 hours each day. Shorter and longer options are provided.



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DAY-TO-DAY PROGRAMME

Day 1 – Arrival in Procida

Arrival in Naples. By shuttle bus you head to the harbour for the short crossing to the picturesque island of Procida, probably the least known and most authentic island in the Bay of Naples. You are picked up from the harbour and settle in at your hotel. You might have some free time to go for a first stroll already, before having dinner.

Accommodation: Procida - Hotel ***

Day 2 – Roundwalk Procida

After breakfast you start a beautiful roundwalk to discover Procida, with its colourful houses and idyllic fishing harbours. Procida is only a small island, and therefore it's possible to 'do' the whole island in one day. First you pass through the narrow streets and walk up to the historical heart of the island: the 'Terra Murata', or 'walled land', dominated by its castle, where you'll enjoy marvellous views. Then the path brings you to one of the most picturesque spots in Italy, the little fishing harbour of Corricella. Its unique setting and coloured houses were used as the film set for "Il Postino". Here you will need some time to look around and take pictures. You then continue the walk along the south-eastern coast through the wooded headlands of Pizzico and Solchiaro. The walk ends at the charming little harbour of Chiaiolella, where you have time for a swim at the large sandy beach or a drink on one of its terraces, before returning to your hotel. Those who still have some energy left can extend the walk and explore the little island of Vivara, linked to Procida by a small (pedestrian) bridge. This island, the ridge of an old volcano, is now a nature reserve and one of the last bits of unspoilt nature in the area. Walk through a timeless Mediterranean landscape, through green forests surrounded by the deep blue sea. In the evening you can dine on some local fish specialty in the colourful harbour of Corricella or opt for a dinner in the garden of your hotel.

Accommodation: Procida - Hotel ***

Total walking distance: 7-10 km. Approx. walking time: 4-5 h.

Day 3 – Northern Procida & Travel to Ischia

This morning you'll have some more time to discover the northern side of the island or visit the small island of Vivara. Or you could just have one final stroll and a drink at the colourful harbour! Then you are brought to the harbour to get the boat for the short crossing to Ischia, known as the 'Green Island', the largest island in the Bay of Naples. A taxi transfer to your hotel is organised for you, but we suggest you leave just your luggage with the taxi driver and wander around a bit in Ischia Porto, before doing the short walk from the harbour to the hotel, through the pretty streets of the old town centre. The last short stretch on the fortified island itself is very scenic and has beautiful viewpoints. You sleep in a beautiful hotel, inside an old medieval castle, built on a rocky island off-shore, which certainly deserves to be explored as well. In the evening you can choose to dine on some local fish specialty in the colourful harbour of Ischia or opt for a great dinner, with spectacular views, on the terrace of the hotel.

Accommodation: Ischia - Hotel Il Monastero ***

Total walking distance: 5 km. Approx. walking time: 2,5 h.

Day 4 – Along the South Coast of Ischia

From your castle hotel you walk down through the intriguing alleys of the fortified island to the bridge which links the castle to the old town centre. From here you start a linear walk along the beautiful southern coast of the island, through a spectacular landscape of terraced vineyards and fantastic lava sculptures, with unforgettable views over the Bay of Naples and Capri. The first part of the walk goes over the cliffs, through vineyards sculpted like Asian paddy fields, and small hamlets. Then you pass the little hamlet of Testaccio, where you descend to the large sandy beach of Marina dei Maronti. Just behind the beach there are several narrow canyons with thermal springs, known about since Roman times. If you have time you can go for a dip! You then walk along the beach to the charming fishing village of Sant'Angelo, where you get the bus back to the hotel.

Accommodation: Ischia - Hotel Il Monastero ***

Total walking distance: 8-15 km. Approx. walking time: 3-5 h.



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Day 5 – Along the highest peak of Ischia to charming Forio

Today you'll discover the island's mountains – a chain of extinct volcanoes which occupy the whole central part of the island. First you gain some height by bus to start your walk either in the hamlet of Fiaiano or the small village of Fontana (several longer/shorter options possible), where you have time for a coffee. From here you walk up to Mt. Epomeo, the highest mountain on the island, and then to the *Capo dell'Uomo*, Ischia's second highest mountain. All this is along easy, comfortable paths. Through forested areas and vineyards, past rock dwellings of monks and hermits, and always with incredible views over the sea, you walk down to Ischia's westernmost village, Forio. After a stroll through its pleasant town centre, you take the bus along the northern coast back to Ischia Porto. If you still have some energy you can make a short walk to one of the island's most interesting volcanoes, the Fondo dell'Oglio.

Accommodation: Ischia - Hotel Il Monastero ***

Total walking distance: 7-10 km. Approx. walking time: 3,5-5 h.

Day 6 – The Island of Capri

In the morning your taxi brings you to the harbour, where you take the boat to the rightly famous island of Capri, which the Roman emperors used to like to come and visit as tourists many centuries ago and has never since lost its fame (off season you travel through Naples). You settle in at your hotel in the less touristy Anacapri, more rural and mountainous. Then you have various options to discover the western side of the island: you can take the chairlift ('funicolare') up to the Monte Solaro, from where you descend along a spectacular path along the ridge all the way down to the 'faro', the lighthouse at the westernmost point of the island. In alternative you can walk directly to the lighthouse, along well-maintained footpaths. From the lighthouse, the walk continues along the coast, along a superb 'botanical' hiking trail, which passes a series of recently restored fortresses, partly built by the English troops to defend the island from Napoleon's fleet. There are several places along the route, where you can perhaps enjoy the clear seawater or just relax at one of the small beaches. The walk ends at the world-famous 'Grotta Azzurra' ('Blue Grotto'), from where you travel back by bus to your hotel (optional extra walk possible). In the evening you'll have the choice of many romantic restaurants.

Accommodation: Capri - Hotel ***

Total walking distance: 9 km. Approx. walking time: 4 h.

Day 7 – Anacapri, the other side of Capri

The last walking day is dedicated to the more famous side of the island of Capri to see the places that have inspired so many over the centuries and always attracted the global jet set. Of course you don't just see the 'touristy' highlights, you also make a beautiful roundwalk along the almost pristine southern coast. First you pass the 'Piazzetta' and the charming backstreets of Capri, with their clear Moresque influence, before walking up to the ruins of one of the most impressive Roman villas in the area, Villa Iovis, which is in an exceptional location with world-class views. On your way up you also pass the wonderful Villa Lysis, rather unknown, but one of the best spots in Capri! Descending towards the untouched coastline of the southern part of the island, you come across the Arco Naturale, a natural bridge, many grottos and finally the famous Faraglioni, three small uninhabited islands, just off the south coast. Through the Gardens of Augustus and the impressive Via Krupp, perhaps the world's most beautiful pedestrian way, you descend to the charming Marina Piccola, where you travel back by local bus to your hotel. This walk can be extended or shortened in many ways, depending on how much time you want to dedicate to walking, relaxing or shopping.

Accommodation: Capri - Hotel ***

Total walking distance: 10 km. Approx. walking time: 4-5 h.

Day 8 – Departure

After breakfast you return by boat to Naples and by shuttle bus to the airport. Extra nights can be booked in a hotel in the city centre or elsewhere (upon request).



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TOUR DETAILS

ACCOMMODATION & MEALS

Accommodation is mostly on a bed and breakfast basis (on one day an evening meal is included – see inclusions) in very good 3-star hotels. All rooms have en-suite facilities.

When dinners are not included you will be free to organise your dinner. You can either eat at the premises of the hotel (recommended in Ischia!) or choose from the wide choice of restaurants in the area. Your accommodation holder can give you good tips.

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'll be staying.

Nights 1 & 2: The first two nights you stay on the idyllic island of Procida in a nice 3-star hotel with a big garden or a beautiful 4-star hotel in the historic centre, depending on your choice.

Night 3, 4 & 5: The next three nights you stay in an exclusive hotel in the ancient monastery of Ischia, located on its 'Rocca', a small rocky island consisting of an Aragonese castle, linked to the main island by a bridge. A wonderful and quiet setting, yet at walking distance from the town centre with its many bars and restaurants.

Night 6 & 7: The final nights are spent in a beautiful and comfortable 3-star hotel in Capri. It is located in a stunning botanical setting of various exotic plants and trees such as palms, pines, mangroves and ficus trees, with a sunny exposure and gentle sea breeze!

UPGRADE/CHANGES IN ACCOMMODATION

It is possible to book an upgrade in some of the places en route. Details and prices on request.

INCLUDED

- 2 nights Hotel in Procida *** - BB
- 3 nights Hotel in Ischia ***- BB
- 2 nights Hotel in Capri *** - BB
- 1 dinner in Procida
- Extensive route notes, with description of the route & tourist information
- Maps at 1 : 25.000 scale (or better)
- 24/7 assistance
- Luggage transfer
- Private transfers as specified

NOT INCLUDED

- Departure taxes & Visas
- Travel Insurance
- Tourist tax
- Drinks and meals not mentioned in the itinerary
- Optional additional tours or activities



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LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

Moderately easy (2): Mostly easy walks, though some involve uphill walking, sometimes on paths with rough surfaces. On some days there are stretches that are difficult for those suffering from vertigo (but NOT dangerous!). On these days alternative options are available. Extensions or shortcuts are also possible on many days.

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

FOOTPATHS & WAYMARKING

Most paths are 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 your feedback on the quality of the paths*). Both on Procida and Capri, many parts of the route that you follow are paved (pedestrian) alleyways.

Waymarking: Only a small part of the route is waymarked; elsewhere you have to follow the route descriptions provided together with the maps. With these you will always be able to find your route.

ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

Arrival: The tour starts in PROCIDA, which can be reached by ferry or hydrofoil from Naples, the nearest city with an international airport /train station. The boat ride takes about half an hour. A pick-up service (included) is arranged from the harbour of Procida.

Departure: The tour ends in CAPRI. From the harbour you travel back by boat to Naples (or, in case you extend your holiday, to Sorrento or Salerno).

TOUR VARIATIONS

EXTRA NIGHTS

It is possible to include extra nights in any of the accommodations en route. It is also possible to extend your tour with a few days in Sorrento, Salerno, Naples, or along the Amalfi Coast. Details and prices on request.

Extra days can also be booked in nearby areas. Route notes for extra options will be provided!!!

Extension 1: Campi Flegrei. Two days in one of the world's most interesting areas, from both an archaeological and a naturalistic point of view. It can also be easily visited from Procida (half an hour by boat).

Extension 2: For those who want to include Naples and/or haven't already visited Pompeii (and/or Vesuvius), there is an option for one or more extra days in Naples, only 20-30 minutes from Pompeii/Vesuvius by local train.

Extension 3: A few days on the famed Sorrento peninsula, with a stunning walk to the Land's End of the area, Punta Campanella. Also from Sorrento, Pompeii/Vesuvius is only 20-30 minutes by local train.

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