



Independent walking tour (AMA1)

The Amalfi Coast & Mountains

Highlights & Hidden Corners of the World's Most Beautiful Coastline



TRIP NOTES 2024

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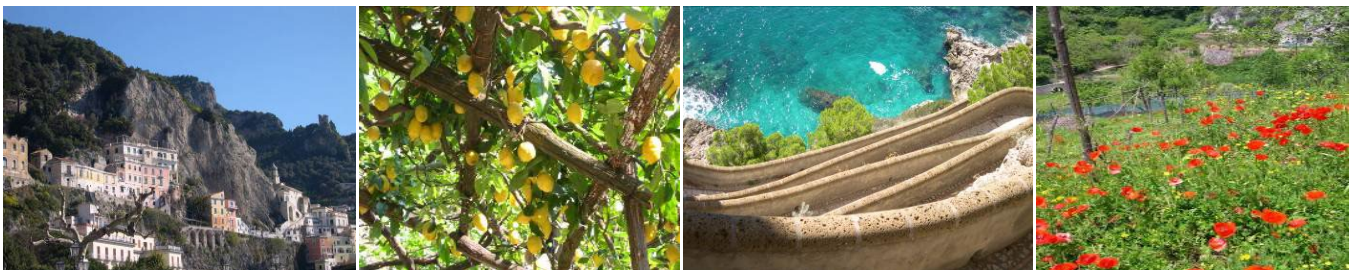
INTRODUCTION

The Amalfi Coast is probably Italy's most beautiful coastline. It is a stunning combination of sea, picturesque coastal towns and mountains, an abundance of both culture and nature. The landscape is immensely varied and surrounded by infinite ever-changing views. It can be typically Mediterranean, intoxicating with its wild perfumed herbs, myrtle shrubs, thyme, rosemary and mastic trees, or almost alpine with meadows and bare rocks. And cultural heritage abounds! Man has created an incomparable mosaic terraced landscape. And beautiful little churches, ruins of castles and old farmhouses are found all over the place... The Costiera Amalfitana is definitely Europe's most scenic and dramatic stretch of coastline! And the best thing is, everything can be discovered on foot!

There are thousands of footpaths on the Amalfi Coast, some of which are famous, such as the "Sentiero degli Dei" (the "Footpath of the Gods"), or are at least a thousand years old, like the "Maestra dei Villaggi" – the 'main road' of the Republic of Amalfi. But there are many unknown trails which are just as beautiful! Going from the sea to the mountains, or vice versa, there are always stupendous views, and you'll walk through little villages, vineyards and olive groves, Mediterranean scrubs and woods, living rocks and chestnut woods.

A large part of this tour is along the coast, and of course it touches all the famous coastal villages, which are must-see attractions: Amalfi itself, but also Atrani, Ravello, Praiano and of course the scenic Positano. But you will also walk through real mountainous scenery, past amazing sheer drops, through chestnut forests and attractive countryside, with wonderful terraced lemon groves and vineyards. And you encounter cultural treasures like rural chapels, ancient farmhouses, old watermills and, every now and then, a herd of goats on your path! Walking in this area will let you enjoy some of the most splendid views of the Amalfi Coast and the Bay of Naples, while being immersed in an almost alpine landscape. You will surely enjoy the rural scenery as well, which makes you feel further away from the glamour of some of the fashionable places along the coast.

This tour shows you the paths most guides don't know about and most books don't tell you about! You will discover that the Amalfi Coast has become Italy's most famous coastline with good reason, but also that there are still places where you can be all by yourself, surrounded by nature.



Please note: this is a moderately easy tour, suitable for those who have walking experience 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 and maps. Average walking times: from approx. 5 to 6 hours each day.



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DAY-TO-DAY PROGRAMME

N.B. For those who want to enjoy some real mountain scenery 'off-the-beaten-track', we recommend starting this tour with two days in the mountains of Gragnano, the birthplace of Italian pasta, and gateway to the Amalfi Coast. Or in alternative on the Monte Faito, above Castellammare di Stabia (see tour details).

Day 1 – Arrival in Agerola

Arrival in Naples. You are met by a taxi (optional) and brought to your quiet agriturismo in the charming little village of Bomerano, beautifully located high above the Amalfi Coast, overlooking the Bay of Salerno. If you arrive early you can walk a short stretch of the world-famous 'Footpath of the Gods' to take in the first spectacular views.

Accommodation: Bomerano - Agriturismo

Day 2 – Towards the highest peaks of the Amalfi Coast

Today's walk brings you towards the highest peaks of the Amalfi Coast, where views are perhaps even more beautiful than from the famous 'Sentiero degli Dei'. The first part of the walk is a relaxed stroll through the charming village of Bomerano, but then, through vineyards and chestnut forest, the path starts to climb. After about an hour walking uphill you reach the ridge of Monte Tre Calli, where you find 360° views. You then walk along the ridge to a natural rock formation known as 'Il Fungo' (*the mushroom*), where you face a choice: you could continue the climb to Monte Sant'Angelo or opt for a relaxed picnic lunch. Then you start the very scenic descent towards the little chapel of the 'Virgin of the Silence'. Views of Positano and the whole coastline until the island of Capri are grand to say the least. Along an easy road, you then walk back down to your agriturismo.

Accommodation: Bomerano - Agriturismo

Total walking distance: 9 km. Approx. walking time: 4,5 h. Ascent & descent: +/- 430 m. (several extensions possible)

Day 3 – On the 'Via Maestra dei Villaggi' to Amalfi

Today you walk down to Amalfi along an incredibly scenic path. From Bomerano you first walk down into the green Praia valley, a wonderful landscape of sheer mountain cliffs and terraced vineyards. Along recently restored footpaths you reach the grotto of St. Barbara, where some medieval frescoes can still be found. Then, after passing the chapel of Sant'Alfonso, you reach the small hamlet of Furore. The route then descends into the spectacular fjord of Furore, with its towering limestone cliffs. You reach the village of San Lazzaro, where you can enjoy a coffee or a drink, and admire one of the most wonderful panoramas of the whole Amalfi Coast. From here you continue your walk downhill, now along one of the oldest pathways of the Amalfi Maritime Republic: the 'Maestra dei Villaggi', or 'Highway of the Villages', an old paved mule track dating back to the 9th century. Past the hamlet of Tovere, above the imposing monastery of Santa Rosa, you then reach the small village of Vettica Minore. From here you continue to Amalfi, passing through the medieval hamlets of Lone and Pastena, both beautifully located above the rocky shore. Through a number of wonderful alleys you end up in the main square, Piazza Duomo. Perhaps you have the time to visit the Duomo, the paper museum or take your time for a swim, before settling in your hotel.

Accommodation: Amalfi - Hotel ***

Total walking distance: 11 km. Approx. walking time: 4,5 h. Ascent & descent: + 200 m./- 830 m.



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Day 4 – Medieval hamlets of the Amalfi Coast & Valle dei Mulini

Today you can either walk or take the local bus to the charming historic village of Ravello, a highlight of the Amalfi Coast. We recommend walking the first very scenic stretch to the beautiful little town of Atrani, with great views of the town centre. Atrani is probably the best-preserved town on the Amalfi Coast, with narrow little streets and a serene town square. Then you can either take the bus, or follow the Valle del Dragone ('Valley of the Dragon') up to Ravello. The French novelist, André Gide, once described the town as being 'closer to the sky than the seashore', and indeed you'll have to climb a number of steps. Ravello is still one of the most exclusive villages of the Amalfi Coast. You can take your time to stroll through Ravello, before walking back down to the coast, past the dramatically located Villa Cimbrone and the hamlet of Pontone, possibly visiting the Torre dello Zirro, a medieval watchtower dominating the towns of Amalfi and Atrani from above. Then, through the charming village of Pontone itself, you walk into the 'Valle dei Mulini', the valley of the mills, with the ruins of Europe's most ancient paper mills, dating back to the 11th century. The comfortable footpath runs alongside the course of the river, in an abundant, green, almost un-Italian landscape. Those who feel like it can penetrate deep into the valley, through spectacular scenery, underneath the towering cliffs, through an almost fairytale-like landscape. Here you can admire a number of beautiful waterfalls. Then you return back down to Amalfi. The path gradually descends past a number of impressive ruins of what were once 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 visit the paper museum, before returning to your hotel.

Accommodation: Amalfi - Hotel ***

Total walking distance: 17 km. Approx. walking time: 6 h. Ascent & descent: +/- 700 m. (shorter options possible)

Day 5 – Roundwalk Valle delle Ferriere

Today you make a spectacular round walk in one of southern Italy's most stunning Nature Reserves, the 'Valle delle Ferriere'. From Amalfi you first take the bus to Scala. From here you first walk to the stunning hamlet of Minuta, from where you have great views over Amalfi, Ravello & Atrani. Then you climb up a flight of stairs and enter the Valle delle Ferriere Nature Reserve. You will see some spectacular scenery, walking over comfortable footpaths underneath the towering cliffs, and passing close to some little waterfalls. Though close to Amalfi, the scenery looks like it belongs to a different world: one of isolated mountains. After crossing the main stream, the path gradually descends through the forest towards the little village of Pogerola, dominating the valley of Amalfi from the west. From here a beautiful medieval mule track curves down to Amalfi, amidst lemon groves and *maquis*, with nice views over the valley.

Accommodation: Amalfi - Hotel ***

Total walking distance: 11 km. Approx. walking time 5 h. Ascent & descent: + 300 m./- 700 m.

Day 6 – Along the Via Maestra dei Villaggi towards Praiano

From Amalfi you take a local bus to the monastery of Santa Rosa, a very scenic drive which saves you a 300 m. climb uphill (you also have the possibility of walking there along part of the 'Maestra dei Villaggi')! From here the walk first goes to the charming little village of Conca dei Marini, where you'll have wonderful views over both Amalfi and the western tip of the peninsula. The route descends to the coast again, and follows the coastline past some charming churches beautifully located above the rocky shore. You now descend into the lower part of the spectacular Fjord of Furore, with its charming fishing village underneath the towering limestone cliffs. From here you walk past the church of Sant'Elia into the Praia valley, and then to the coastal village of Praiano, with an optional descent to the very picturesque inlet of Marina di Praia, the little old harbour of Praiano.

Accommodation: Praiano - Hotel ***

Total walking distance: 11 km. Approx. walking time: 6 h. Ascent & descent: + 700 m./- 500 m. (shorter options possible)



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Optional extra day

From your hotel you walk through the narrow streets of Praiano, up towards the little church of Santa Maria di Costantinopoli. From here you walk on a comfortable path above the village itself into the Praia valley, a beautiful green valley with many vineyards clinging to the cliffs. You then climb up to the little church of Sant'Alfonso and from here to the very scenic caves of Santa Barbara: another short section uphill brings you to the beginning of the famous 'Sentiero degli Dei' (Footpath of the Gods), a walk with unrivalled views. After a very panoramic stretch with views over the whole Amalfi Coast, stretching out as far as the island of Capri, you start the descent back to Praiano again, passing over a centuries-old flight of steps. For those of you who still have some energy a descent to the little inlet of 'Cavitella' is highly recommended.

Accommodation: Praiano - Hotel ***

Total walking distance: 11 km. Approx. walking time: 5 h. Ascent & descent: +/- 600 m.

Day 7 – Along the 'Path of the Gods' to Positano

You start your walk in the picturesque whitewashed alleys of Praiano. Then, along a medieval pilgrim route, you walk uphill towards the monastery of San Domenico, set in stupendous scenery, dominating the coast from its hilltop. Here you can have a little rest before continuing the climb uphill, through spectacular scenery with bizarre rock formations and luxurious vegetation. Before you know it you reach one of Italy's most famous footpaths, the 'Sentiero degli Dei', or 'Footpath of the Gods'. This path 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 down to Positano itself, one of the most charming villages on the coast. There is ample time to explore or perhaps go for a swim, before you return by local bus to Praiano, a short, but very scenic drive.

Accommodation: Praiano - Hotel ***

Total walking distance: 8,5 km. Approx. walking time: 4,5 h. Ascent & descent: + 500 m./- 600 m.

Day 8 – Departure

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

N.B. In order to get a taste of the trails of the Amalfi Coast, before they became immensely popular, we strongly recommend to book two days in Gragnano, before walking on to Agerola. Here you can still walk some beautiful trails without the crowds you now often find along the Amalfi Coast.

You can also extend this tour with two days in Positano and/or Capri For those who do not fancy busy 'downtown' Positano it is possible to book an agriturismo above Positano.



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DAY-TO-DAY PROGRAMME (EXTRA DAYS IN GRAGNANO)

Day 1 – Arrival in Gragnano

Arrival in Naples. You are met by a taxi (optional) and brought to your hotel/B&B in the heart of the historical centre of Gragnano, the birthplace of the Italian pasta, located at the feet of the Lattari Mountains, overlooking the Bay of Naples. If you arrive early you can already make a stroll through the old town, or visit the pasta museum.

Accommodation: Gragnano – B&B

Day 2 – Villages & Towards the highest peaks of the Amalfi Coast

For today you have a few options, according to your own interest. Today's walk brings you from the centre to the medieval hamlets belonging to the city of Gragnano. This area was the most northern outpost of the medieval Republic of Amalfi, reason why there are a number of fortresses and castles in the area. After strolling through the Hamlet of Caprile, you'll walk up a site valley along a stunning medieval aqueduct. You then have the chance to walk up further into the mountains, which, although close to the city, offers an absolutely wild scenery, between forests and steep canyons. Either way, you'll return to the small hamlet of Castello, worth a visit for its church and castle. Then you descend into the stunning 'Valle dei Mulini', the valley where the first watermills grinded flour, for what has become over the centuries, the Italian trademark, the pasta! Still today all over Italy the pasta from Gragnano is reputed one of the best, and still today there are a few factories producing pasta the traditional way. After dwelling through this romantic area, with now most mills overgrown by the vegetation, you return to the city. At dinner of course you'll have some great pasta!

Accommodation: Gragnano – B&B

Total walking distance: 9/15 km. Approx. walking time: 3 - 5 h. Ascent & descent: +/- 250/800 m. (short/long option)



Day 3 – Villages & Towards the highest peaks of the Amalfi Coast

Today's walk brings you from the northern site of the Lattari mountains, over the ridge to the highplain of Agerola on the southern side, overlooking the Amalfi Coast. First you walk up to one of the most intriguing strongholds of the Amalfitan republic, the fortified church of Pino, located in an amazingly scenic position, with great views over the Bay of Naples and the highest peaks of the Amalfi Coast. Through chestnut forest and along a few natural springs, you then reach the ridge, from where views open up to the southern part. A relaxed stroll, first through the forest, then to a pretty rural landscape, brings you down to the charming little village of Bomerano. If you arrive early you can have a drink in the square or walk a short stretch of the world-famous 'Footpath of the Gods' to take in some more spectacular views. Along an easy road, you then walk to your agriturismo.

Accommodation: Bomerano - Agriturismo

Total walking distance: 14 km. Approx. walking time: 5,5 h. Ascent & descent: +800 m./- 300 m. (several extensions possible)



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TOUR DETAILS

ACCOMMODATION & MEALS

All nights are spent in beautiful, welcoming farmhouses (*'agriturismo'*), or in small, characteristic, family-run hotels (generally 3-star). All rooms have en-suite facilities. All accommodations are on a **B&B** basis. All breakfasts are included. No evening meals are included so 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'll be staying. On some occasions you have the option of having your lunch in a restaurant along the way.

INCLUDED

- 7 nights accommodation (2 nights in Agerola / 3 nights in Amalfi / 2 nights in Praiano)
- All breakfasts
- Extensive route notes, with description of the route & tourist information
- Maps at 1 : 25.000 scale or more
- GPX-tracks of each walk
- Luggage transfers
- 24/7 h local assistance

NOT INCLUDED

- Departure & city taxes
- Visa
- Travel Insurance
- Drinks and meals not mentioned in the itinerary
- Optional additional tours or activities
- Tips
- Items of personal nature

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

Level: Moderately easy 2/3. Mostly easy paths, no technical difficulties. There are some sections steeply uphill, sometimes on paths with rough surfaces. On some days extensions or shortcuts are possible.

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

Footpaths: 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 your feedback on the quality of the paths*).



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Waymarking: Most paths are now waymarked (partly by us); elsewhere it is necessary to follow the route descriptions, provided together with the maps and GPX-tracks. With these it is always possible to find your route.

ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

Arrival: The tour starts in BOMERANO (AGEROLA), or GRAGNANO, connected to Naples by a frequent bus service. 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 in PRAIANO. A frequent bus service can bring you to either Sorrento or Amalfi/Salerno, where you travel on to your next destination (Naples or Rome can both be easily reached). Several taxi services are available to bring you directly to your next destination.

TOUR VARIATIONS

EXTRA NIGHTS

It is possible to include extra nights in any of the accommodations en route. Descriptions for extra walks and sightseeing options will be provided.

At the beginning or end of the tour there is also an opportunity to extend your tour with a few extra nights in Naples and/or Pompeii, or do a great round walk on Mt. Vesuvius. The tour can also be extended with a few days in Positano or on the island of Capri. Details and prices on request.

SHORTER & LONGER VERSIONS

Shorter versions, as well as longer versions of this tour are also available.

N.B. In order to get a taste of the trails of the Amalfi Coast, before they became immensely popular, we strongly recommend to book two days in Gragnano, before walking on to Agerola. Here you can still walk some beautiful trails without the crowds you now often find along the Amalfi Coast. See description above.



Bespoke tours, with a slightly modified programme, suiting your agenda can be organised as well. Prices on request.

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