



The Heart of the Amalfi Coast & the Sorrento Peninsula

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



TRIP NOTES 2021

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INTRODUCTION

The Sorrento Peninsula has been a tourist destination for centuries, certainly since the days of the Grand Tour and perhaps even as far back as Roman times. In Victorian times Sorrento became a corner of paradise for many North Europeans, with the bright Mediterranean sunshine and dramatic fusion of mountains and sea helping them to forget the cold winter back home! Today Sorrento still exudes the same charm and elegance of those times from its wonderful setting, looking out 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 opportunities 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 of the mythical 'Islands of the Sirens', the nearby island of Capri, and across the Bay of Naples to Ischia, Procida, Naples and of course Mount Vesuvius, dominating the bay. Behind you are the Lattari Mountains plunging into the sea, and on many occasions you have 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 also includes 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 "Footpath 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 had in the area, some of which are frequently 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, completely different, but equally beautiful.

You will walk along well-maintained footpaths and paved alleyways and through attractive countryside with wonderful terraced lemon groves, vineyards and cultural treasures like rural chapels, ancient farmhouses, old watermills and wonderful villas and villages, where you can sit down and relax with a drink. You'll have time to visit the villages which are must-see attractions: Amalfi itself, but also Atrani, wonderfully preserved through the centuries, Ravello with its magnificent villas and of course the scenic and fashionable Positano. And you'll get 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 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 - 5 hours each day (several longer & shorter options available).



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DAY-TO-DAY PROGRAMME

Day 1 – Arrival in Amalfi

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 weariness of the journey.

Accommodation: Amalfi - Hotel ***

Day 2 – The Torre dello Ziro & Valle dei Mulini

Today you first make an easy walk, which immediately gives you 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 can still notice the strong Moorish influence. An ancient flight of steps takes you up beneath the impressive limestone cliffs towards the little village of Pontone, part of the medieval defence system of the town of Amalfi. The main point of interest is the marvellous Torre dello Ziro, located on a narrow ridge in a park-like landscape, with unforgettable views of Amalfi to the one side and Atrani to the other. This area also offers a number of marvellous picnic spots, all with dramatic views. 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, across 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 some of the first paper mills in Europe, 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. As the walk is relatively short you've still got some time left to wander around in Amalfi or take your time for a swim.

Accommodation: Amalfi - Hotel ***

Total walking distance: 9-10 km. Approx. walking time: 4-5 h.

Day 3 – Along the 'Path of the Gods' to Positano

Today you first take a local bus up to the small village of Bomerano, on the Agerola high plain. Here starts 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, stretching out as far as the island of Capri, you reach the junction for the monastery of San Domenico, set in stupendous scenery, dominating the coast from its hilltop (optional detour along a medieval pilgrim route). You then continue on a more or less level path, 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 spectacular 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, but it will take you a bit of time as there are so 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 at your hotel in the centre, at walking distance from the beach.

Accommodation: Positano - Hotel ***

Total walking distance: 9 km. Approx. walking time: 4-5 h.

Day 4 – Positano seen from above

First you take the local bus up to Montepertuso, where you start a very scenic walk around the upper valley of Positano. Following ancient footpaths through the forest and past marvellous viewpoints, you climb up towards Santa Maria al Castello, the old fortress defending the passage between the Amalfi and Sorrento sides of the



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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 hut). Those who feel like it can climb up from here to Monte Sant'Angelo, the highest mountain of the peninsula, a very demanding but rewarding ascent. The standard walk continues through the forest and zigzags back down to Montepertuso. You then return to Positano along another medieval mule track.

Accommodation: Positano - Hotel ***

Total walking distance: 11 km. Approx. walking time: 4-5 h.

Day 5 – The Alta Via dei Monti Lattari

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 longer route follows the long-distance trail 'Alta Via dei Monti Lattari', and goes past the fortified church of Santa Maria al Castello, Monte Comune, the 'beacon' of Monte Vico Alvano and then descends to the Colli di San Pietro from where you continue to the Colli di Fontanelle (start of the shorter route). From here you take a little path, which runs parallel to the shore, 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 you descend along well maintained paths to Marina di Crapolla (where Saint Peter is alleged to have disembarked on his way to Rome) where you are free to have a swim. Then head back up and settle in at your beautiful agriturismo in the middle of the orchards, where you will have a lovely meal made from local organic produce tonight.

Accommodation: Sant'Agata sui Due Golfi - Agriturismo

Total walking distance: 9 km. Approx. walking time: 4-5 h.

Day 6 – To the Finis Terrae of the Amalfi Coast

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 opt to follow the long-distance trail 'Alta Via dei Monti Lattari', all the way from your agriturismo to the end of the path, or take a local bus to Termini, the last village before the headland. From here you follow the medieval steps up to the small church of San Costanzo, where you have 360° views 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 legend, Ulysses erected a temple in honour of Athena. In some parts the path can be a bit demanding, though never too difficult. The return, between Punta Campanella and Termini, is on a very comfortable path, the old Roman Via Minerva, with great views of Capri and a number of medieval watchtowers, which once protected the coast. From Termini you then take the local bus back to Sant'Agata sui Due Golfi, to have another night dining in your agriturismo.

Accommodation: Sant'Agata sui Due Golfi - Agriturismo

Total walking distance: 12 km. Approx. walking time: 5,5 h.

Day 7 – From Sant'Agata to the Sorrento Coast

Today you have several options to walk down to Sorrento, depending on how much you want 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 Massa Lubrense and through several charming little hamlets within the same municipality, all surrounded by wonderful olive & lemon groves. An optional detour brings you to the castle where Napoleon's general watched the siege of Capri. A shorter route brings you past the village of Sant'Agata directly down to Sorrento. Whichever way you choose you will enter Sorrento from a great viewpoint, which many painters over the centuries have depicted Sorrento from and helped it become so famous. 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 at your centrally located hotel where your luggage will be waiting for you.

Accommodation: Sorrento - Hotel */******

Total walking distance: 5,5 km. Approx. walking time: 4 h.



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Day 8 – Free day

From Sorrento you can undertake several interesting excursions, combined with some walking: the ‘classical’ day-trip to the island of Capri or a visit to Pompeii with a hike on Mt. Vesuvius, for example.

On Capri you can make a beautiful roundwalk around the eastern part of the island, which shows you most of the ‘highlights’ of the island, both cultural and natural wonders, with beautiful views all around. After exploring the town centre, with its famous *Piazzetta* where the jet set used to gather, you walk through the characteristic, Moresque-influenced streets towards one of the best spots in Capri– the exceptional, yet relatively unknown Villa Lysis– a stunning Villa set in a stunning landscape. The walk continues through an unrivalled Mediterranean landscape towards the ruins of the Imperial Villa Iovis, which once belonged to the Roman Emperor Tiberius. From here views over the Bay of Naples are spectacular! Then you walk back down and proceed towards the Arco Naturale, before heading down to the Grotta di Matermania, which is reputed to be one of the places where the god Mithras was worshipped. The final part of your walk takes you along the pristine southern part of the island to the *Faraglioni*– three sea stacks, perhaps the most famous and most painted rocks in the world, just off the south coast.

Pompeii of course needs no introduction. Its Roman ruins are considered to be the world’s most complete and fascinating ruins. A visit to Pompeii gives you an amazing insight into the life of a Roman city, especially when walking along its chariot-marked back streets. You will be captivated by the exceptional frescoes to be found throughout the city or by the opulence of the villas, with their atriums and charming peristyles, owned by the rich and influential of the day. Visit the amphitheatre as well as the Villa of Mysteries with its masterpiece frescoes depicting the secret Dionysus rites, the Roman Forum and basilica, temples, public baths, and the tiny Odeon created for music recitals. The visit can be combined with a great roundwalk as well, we recommend climbing Mount Vesuvius, the volcano that with the fatal eruption of 79 AD completely destroyed the bustling city of Pompeii. You can make an amazing roundwalk here, completely different from the standard visit to Vesuvius (and normally closed to the public), which makes you feel like you're in a completely different world!

But also close to Sorrento 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 Queen Joanna’s favourite bathing place, a beautiful little bay. Depending on whether you want to extend the walk you can reach the small fishing village of Marina di Puolo, before returning to Sorrento.

Accommodation: Sorrento - Hotel */******

Total walking distance: 4 km. Approx. walking time: 3 h.

Day 9 – Departure

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. Your accommodations are mainly on a **B&B** basis.

Only on the two nights at the agriturismo in Sant'Agata are you on a **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'll be staying. On some occasions you have the option of having your lunch in a restaurant along the way.

Nights 1 & 2: The first two nights are spent at Atrani or Amalfi, ancient towns of the Amalfi Coast, in either a welcoming and comfortable 3-star hotel or a beautiful 4-star hotel in the heart of the town. All hotels are centrally located at walking distance from the shore and all major 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 in either a comfortable 3-star hotel, or a larger 4-star hotel. All hotels are at walking distance from the shore (along Positano's charming little streets/steps).

Nights 5 & 6: These two nights are spent near the small village of Massa Lubrense, on the high plain dominating both the Bay of Naples as well as the Gulf of Salerno and Amalfi Coast, in a beautiful agriturismo.

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

INCLUDED

- 2 nights Hotel in Atrani or Amalfi *** - BB
- 2 nights Hotel in Positano *** - BB
- 2 nights Agriturismo in Sant'Agata dei due Golfi - HB
- 2 nights Hotel in Sorrento **** - BB
- Extensive route notes, with description of the route & tourist information
- Maps at 1 : 25.000 scale or more detailed.
- GPS tracks of each walk.
- 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
- Tips
- Items of personal nature

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

Moderately easy (2-3): Mostly easy walks, though some include 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 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 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*).

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.

N.B In case you don't feel confident a local guide can be provided for some of the trails.

ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

Arrival: The tour starts in AMALFI, connected with Salerno by a frequent bus (and boat) service and to Naples by a less frequent bus service. In the 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 in SORRENTO. A frequent train service can bring you to Naples, while a frequent bus service can bring you directly to Naples Airport.



TOUR VARIATIONS

EXTRA NIGHTS & EXTENSIONS

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.

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.

Possible extension n.° 2 : CAPRI from SORRENTO

To make just a brief visit to Capri you can also book an extra night in Sorrento. From Sorrento you can easily make a day-excursion to Capri as there are many direct boats and hydrofoils.

UPGRADE/CHANGES IN ACCOMMODATION

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



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