



Luxury Amalfi Coast Walking

*Naples, Vesuvius & Herculaneum, Pompeii, Amalfi & Atrani, Ravello,
'Sentiero degli Dei', Praiano, Positano & Capri*



TRIP NOTES 2019

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INTRODUCTION

The Amalfi Coast is definitely one of the most beautiful coastlines in Europe, an intriguing mix between an overwhelming natural environment and the patient labour of men, who have transformed the steep mountain slopes into a cascade of terraced lemon groves, with charming villages, chapels and other sites of cultural interest scattered all around.

Its dramatic coastline offers wonderful views, differing with every step you take, and the smell of rosemary and citrus trees fills the air, fields of multicoloured roses overwhelm the eyes and sandy beaches are magical to the touch. It offers an extraordinary palette of colours, with deep azure skies, white limestone cliffs, deep blue seas, and bright citrus orchards lit by the dazzling Mediterranean sun. This intoxicating sensual feast inspires a celebration of the goodness of life itself. A web of ancient pathways winds along coastal cliffs, leading from charming seaside towns, through rustic woodlands and up to beautiful villages perched atop craggy peaks. Highlights include your hike along the stunning 'Sentiero degli Dei' ('Path of the Gods'), one of the world's finest day walks, the wonderful walk into the intriguing Valley of the Mills – the site of Europe's first paper mills, almost 1000 years old – the spectacular villages of Positano, Atrani and Ravello, and a visit and beautiful roundwalk over the island of Capri. And of course beautiful Amalfi itself: as has been said, for an Amalfitano the day he goes to heaven will be a day like any other...

But it is not just the scenery of the Amalfi Coast, the rest of the Bay of Naples region is fascinating as well. Not without reason did the Romans label it their 'Campania Felix'. 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, but best known for its eruption in AD 79 that led to the destruction of the Roman cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum, a must for history buffs – and fascinating for everybody else regardless.

You visit the intriguing city of Naples, definitely one of the world's most interesting cities and more than worth a visit, despite all the prejudice. A city with thousands of years of history, officially founded by the Greeks, which also boasts the world's finest museum on Roman history and some amazing Baroque architecture. And of course the area is also known for its great food, including the world's best pizza. You visit Pompeii of course, the world-famous ruins, which give a real-life impression of how a Roman city looked, especially the way we plan the visit, away from the crowds. You also go for a great roundwalk on Mount Vesuvius, the volcano which caused the destruction of Pompeii. Even if you've already walked up Vesuvius with thousands of other tourists, the walk you do this time will still be one of the highlights of the trip!

On this enchanting walking adventure you will discover that it is with good reason that the Amalfi Coast has become Italy's most famous coastline, but also that it only takes a little effort to get 'off the beaten track'. At just a few hundred metres from the crowds, you will find yourself surrounded by nature. On this tour we also take you beyond the crowds in Naples to experience the hidden treasures and authentic culture of this intriguing city. You will discover the hidden tracks of Mount Vesuvius, offering amazing views over the whole Bay of Naples. In short, you'll discover the real Italian paradise.



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, some of them just recently restored by the local authorities. Average walking times: approx 5 hours each day.



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DAY-TO-DAY PROGRAMME

Day 0 Naples

N.B. If you arrive one day earlier you have the possibility to pay a visit to the world-famous archaeological museum, where all the artefacts from Pompeii and Herculaneum are displayed, and/or the equally wonderful Capodimonte museum.

Day 1 Arrival - Naples

Today you arrive in the bustling city of Naples. After settling in at your centrally located hotel, in the heart of the historical centre of Naples you can go for a short stroll through the colourful streets already, soaking up its atmosphere, or visit a museum. Towards the end of the afternoon you meet your tour leader and the rest of the group. After a brief introduction to the tour, we will go for a rewarding roundwalk through the heart of Naples, covering the most interesting 'highlights', such as the Royal Palace, the royal theatre, the beautiful 'Galleria' and the medieval castles of course. Then we pass through unknown, lively (but safe!) neighbourhoods, with their unbelievable history, where we can find Greek, Roman and medieval buildings all in the space of a few square metres. The walk also brings us through quiet parks and along the shore, to relax from the hectic street life in the city with a rewarding view of the Bay of Naples. In the evening we dine in a very nice restaurant close to your hotel. **Accommodation: Naples - Meals included: 1 dinner**

Day 2 Exploring Mt. Vesuvius & Herculaneum

This morning we travel south and drive up to Mount Vesuvius, the volcano that completely destroyed the bustling city of Pompeii with the fatal eruption of 79 AD. We make an amazing roundwalk here, completely different from the standard visit to Vesuvius (and one which is normally closed to the public), which makes us feel like we are in a completely different world! The walk takes us past the impressive volcanic phenomena to be seen around the crater: lava flows, pumice fields and grottos and the amazing 'Valley of the Giant', culminating in a walk to the top. The literal 'high' light is a spectacular detour, led by a specialist volcano guide, which will take us right around the crater rim and up to the highest point at 1281 metres (4000 feet), where we have the very best view of the Bay of Naples, one of the panoramic wonders of the world. We then descend and have a relaxed lunch on the slopes of Mt. Vesuvius, before travelling back down to Herculaneum. This far less visited site boasts some perfectly preserved noble villas. A short visit is definitely worth it. Towards the end of the afternoon you travel back to Naples, where we can have a short stroll and 'aperitivo' in the piazza, before returning to your hotel. Tonight you dine at one of the best pizzerias around (quite a claim considering Naples is already considered to have the world's best pizza!).

Accommodation: Naples - Meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 lunch, 1 dinner

Day 3 Along Pompeii to the Amalfi Coast

This morning we travel south, under the shadow Mount Vesuvius again, but now we are driven straight to Pompeii, considered to be the world's most fascinating ruins. A visit to Pompeii gives us an amazing insight into the life of a Roman city, especially as we walk along its chariot-marked backstreets. We 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. What many don't know is that the modern-day town of Pompeii is also worth the detour, if alone for its amazing sanctuary. We will go for a stroll here and then have lunch in a great place in downtown Pompeii. After lunch we head on by private coach to the Amalfi Coast. The coach drops us off in the charming village of Pontone, once a defensive stronghold for the Republic of Amalfi. Here we walk up onto the narrow ridge that contains part of the



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medieval defence system, in a park-like landscape past shady pine trees and through fields of wildflowers, and enjoy stunning views across the Valle del Dragone to the gardens and villas of Ravello. A series of ascents and descents eventually brings us to the ruins of the Torre dello Ziro, known from the play 'The Duchess of Malfi'. From here you enjoy dramatic views of both Amalfi and Atrani, and the stunning coastline. You retrace your steps to Pontone, where we can enjoy an 'aperitivo' in the shade of the lemon trees, before our bus brings you to the next base, the stunningly beautiful town of Amalfi. There may still be some time left for a dip into the Mediterranean. In the evening we all eat together in a nice restaurant in the medieval town centre, close to the hotel.

Accommodation: Amalfi - Meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 lunch, 1 dinner

Day 4 Amalfi & the Valle dei Mulini

In the morning we first pay a short visit to the beautiful medieval town with its wonderful Duomo and Paradise Cloister. Amalfi was once an important naval power, like Venice, and its past glory still shows. Every street hides a charming square, and it's a real pleasure to wander through the labyrinth of whitewashed alleys. We will go through the Piazza dei Dogi and past the Antichi Arsenali. Another street takes us to the Vagliendola Quarter, with its tower houses and the famous Hotel dei Cappuccini – once a monastery called San Pietro della Canonica, founded in the 13th century. Then you walk up (optional bus) to the charming little village of Pontone, gateway to the Torre dello Ziro, but also to the intriguing Valle dei Mulini, the Valley of the Watermills, with its ruins of Europe's most ancient paper factories, dating back to the 11th century. The path takes us deep into the valley, to the entrance of the nature reserve, with its lush vegetation and waterfalls. We have a great picnic lunch near the river before returning to Amalfi. From here it's about an hour's walk back down to Amalfi, passing through the charming little backstreets of the town centre. We will now also have the option to visit the fascinating paper museum, the Museo della Carta. Back in Amalfi there is still some time for a swim or an 'aperitivo'. Then in the evening we all join together for a last great evening meal. We are picked up by private boat and brought to a nice restaurant located in a beautiful little bay nearby. After dinner we travel back to our hotel, gliding by boat over the glorious Mediterranean

Accommodation: Amalfi - Meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 picnic lunch, 1 dinner

Day 5 The historical heart of the Amalfi Coast: Amalfi, Atrani & Ravello

From Amalfi we first walk to the beautiful little town of Atrani, along a very scenic path, with great viewpoints over the town centre. From Atrani we proceed through the narrow little white streets and then up the 'Valley of the Dragon', until we reach Ravello, another highlight of the Amalfi Coast, which we have plenty of time to explore. Ravello not only has a very interesting history and many medieval monuments, but also offers beautiful views over the Amalfi Coast, and villas with stupendous gardens. We pay an extensive visit to the dramatically located Villa Cimbrone, with its amazing gardens and one of the coast's most famous viewpoints. Then we walk back down through the hamlet of Castiglione to the little town of Atrani, passing through the vineyards and lemon groves. In Atrani, one of the best-preserved towns on the coast, we now take the time to look around the narrow little white streets of the town centre, and perhaps have a drink in the square. From here it's now only 15 minutes back to Amalfi, passing along the coast. In the evening we are free to choose from a large choice of restaurants, ranging from simple pizzerias to exclusive restaurants.

Accommodation: Amalfi - Meals included: 1 breakfast

Day 6 Along the 'Sentiero degli Dei' down to Positano

In the morning we take the local bus for a very scenic trip to the village of Bomerano, high above the coast, where we can take a coffee and buy some sandwiches. Then we start walking along one of the most famous footpaths of the area, the 'Path of the Gods'. This path really lives up to its name, suspended between the sky and the Mediterranean. It winds through unique scenery, with unrivalled views over the coast and sea. For a few hours we will be walking through some of the most spectacular scenery of the whole Amalfi Coast, until we reach the charming little hamlet of Nocelle. Here we can have a nice lunch in a good restaurant, with



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amazing views over Positano and the Amalfi Coast (alternatively you can have a great 'picnic with a view' along the route). Passing another spectacular valley we then arrive at the little village of Montepertuso. After that it's only a short walk down to Positano, one of the most charming locations on the Amalfi Coast, an almost vertical town of colourful buildings reached by a network of ancient paths and tracks. We stroll through its small, almost oriental alleys and perhaps have a swim, or a drink on one of its many pleasant terraces, before settling in at your beautifully located hotel. In the evening we are free to choose from a large choice of restaurants, ranging from simple pizzerias to more exclusive restaurants.

Accommodation: Positano - Meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 lunch

Day 7 By boat to Capri – discovery walk of the island

Today we travel by boat to the rightly famous island of Capri, the island which the Roman emperors used to like to come and visit as tourists many centuries ago, and has never since lost its fame. Here a wonderful roundwalk can be made, starting from Marina Grande, the main harbour, and then through lemon groves and gardens to the central square of the little town of Capri, the famous 'Piazzetta', the centre of mundane life. Then we make another beautiful roundwalk around the eastern part of the island, which shows you most of the 'highlights' of the island. These are both cultural and natural wonders, always accompanied with beautiful views in an unrivalled Mediterranean landscape. The walk brings us past the amazing Villa Lysis and the ruins of the Imperial Villa Iovis, one of the villas of the Roman emperor Tiberius. We will walk past the Arco Naturale, and of course past the Faraglioni, three sea stacks off the south coast, perhaps the most famous and most painted rocks in the world. We have a great picnic lunch in an amazing spot, after which we have time for a coffee or an ice cream. Walking back to the centre we have the opportunity to visit the Certosa and the Gardens of Augustus, where we can also opt to walk down to Marina Piccola, along the spectacular Via Krupp. This walk can be extended or shortened in many ways. We then travel back to Positano by boat late in the afternoon. A nice meal in a relaxed atmosphere is the perfect end for our final day on the Amalfi Coast.

Accommodation: Positano - Meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 picnic lunch, 1 dinner

Day 8 Positano

The tour ends today after breakfast in Positano. You can make your way to Salerno or Naples, either by boat or bus. A taxi transfer can be arranged on request.



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TOUR DETAILS

ACCOMMODATION & MEALS

All nights are spent in beautiful, characteristic hotels, mostly historical buildings (generally 3/4-star; 4/5-star on some departure dates). All rooms have en-suite facilities.

All accommodations include breakfast. Most evening meals are included, for which we have selected the best available restaurants. On two nights you are free to choose from the wide choice of restaurants in the area. Your guide can give you good tips.

Also some (picnic) lunches on walking days are included in the tour price. On other days you are free to have your own lunch. Here you have the option of having your lunch in a nice restaurant, or purchasing your supplies for a picnic lunch.

What to be aware of with others

Compare the inclusions and locations of our hotels with similar 'Amalfi Coast' tours from the main UK tour operators (most tours are based exclusively in Agerola, not in Amalfi...) and compare our prices with similar tours from any other operator around the globe. You'll find a number of reasons to choose a Genius Loci Trip !

Night 1 & 2: The first two nights are spent in Naples. Your accommodation is a 4-star hotel in an amazing 'palazzo' in the heart of the historical centre.

Nights 3, 4 & 5: These three nights are spent in Amalfi, the ancient capital of the Amalfi Coast. Your recently renovated 4-star hotel is located in a central position, right in the historical heart of the town, just a few metres from the shore.

Nights 6 & 7: The last two nights you stay in the romantic and fashionable little town of Positano, with its characteristic houses built onto the steep slopes of the mountains. You stay in either a comfortable 3-star hotel, right on the beach, or a larger 4-star hotel. Both hotels are centrally located at walking distance from the shore, shops, and all main monuments.

UPGRADE/CHANGES IN ACCOMMODATION

On some dates we run an upgraded version of this tour, staying in luxurious 4-star hotels. Look for the 'Premiere Inns' signs.

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

Moderately easy (2/3): Mostly easy walks, though some involve uphill walking, sometimes on paths with rough surfaces. On the Amalfi Coast there are a number of steps! On most days shortcuts are possible (as well as occasional extensions).

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.



INCLUSIONS

- Private English-speaking tour leader for 8 days
- Accommodation: 2 nights Naples, 3 nights Amalfi, 2 nights Positano all in good ***/**** hotels
- Meals: 7 breakfasts, 5 dinners (good restaurants), 2 picnic lunches, 4 warm lunches
- All private transfers as indicated throughout the entire itinerary
- Entrance fees of all sites along the itinerary
- Special activities as outlined in the day-by-day itinerary
- Guest experts for special places
- 24/7 assistance
- Luggage transport
- All gratuities for baggage, porters & hotel service

NOT INCLUDED

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

ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

Arrival: The tour starts in NAPLES, a city with an international airport, and connected to Rome and all other major Italian cities by a frequent (high speed) train service.

A taxi pick-up service can be arranged either from Naples airport or train station.

Departure: The tour ends after breakfast in POSITANO. A private transfer can bring you to either Sorrento, Salerno, or Naples, from where you travel on to your next destination.
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TOUR VARIATIONS

It is possible to include some extra nights before or after your tour, in any of the accommodations 'en route'. For those who have never been to Naples an extra day here is strongly recommended.

The tour can easily be extended with a few days here. Also in SALERNO (a nice city and a good base for visiting Paestum), or ROME several good accommodations are available. Details and prices on request.

The tour can also be extended with a few days on a beautiful agriturismo in the Cilento, for some relaxation in the countryside. Several superb accommodations are available. Details & prices on request.

Bespoke Adventures

Many of these tours can be turned into Private '[Bespoke Adventures](#)' to accommodate private group travel.

We can organise both "off the shelf" itineraries, as well as create custom itineraries to meet your special needs. Book the dates you want, with the family or friends you wish to bring along!

Longer and shorter versions of this tour are also available. Prices on request.

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