

Amalfi Coast & Bay of Naples

Authentic Luxury Walking

Naples, Capri, Pompeii & Vesuvius, Ravello, Amalfi & Atrani, 'Sentiero degli Dei', Positano, Minori & Maiori, 'Lemon Path', Cetara & Vietri sul Mare



TRIP NOTES 2024

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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. Some paths have become (too) famous, like the 'Sentiero degli Dei' ('Path of the Gods'), but there are many more equally beautiful paths, without the crowds. You'll do one of the world's finest day walks, along the coast between Cetara and Maiori, walk the famous 'Path of the Lemons' and do the wonderful walk into the intriguing Valley of the Mills—the site of Europe's first paper mills, almost 1000 years old. You'll visit the spectacular villages of Cetara, Vietri, Atrani, Minori and Ravello, 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 (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 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 on this trip will still be one of the highlights of the trip!

As well you'll 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!

On this enchanting walking adventure you will discover that it is with good reason that the Amalfi Coast & Bay of Naples have 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 the Amalfi Coast, away from the crowds and show you the unknown 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, 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 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 'Lungomare', the seaside boulevard with views of the whole Bay, the Royal Palace, the San Carlo theatre, the beautiful 'Galleria' and the medieval castles. And of course we also 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'll dine in a very nice restaurant close to our hotel.

Accommodation: Naples - Meals included: 1 dinner

Day 2 Around Mt. Vesuvius & Pompeii to the Amalfi Coast

This morning we travel south and drive up to Mount Vesuvius, the volcano that with the fatal eruption of 79 AD completely destroyed the bustling city of Pompeii. We make an amazing roundwalk here, completely different from the standard visit to Vesuvius (and 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 can have a relaxed lunch on the slopes of Mt. Vesuvius, before travelling down 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 when walking along its chariot-marked back streets. 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 famous 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 realise is that the modern-day town of Pompeii is definitely worth the detour as well, if only for its amazing sanctuary. We will go for a stroll here and then have an 'aperitivo' to look back on a great day. Then we drive on by private coach to the Amalfi Coast. Tonight we'll stay in a stunningly located hotel on the cliffs, at the beautiful village of Cetara, the lesser known and authentic part of the Amalfi Coast. We'll have a great dinner on the premises of our hotel.

Total walking: 4,5 km (Vesuvius - Ascent & descent. +/- 200 m.) + 3-5 km. (Pompeii). Approx. walking time: 2 + 2,5 h.

Accommodation: Hotel ** - Cetara – HB (Dinner included)**



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Day 3 Cetara, Vietri sul Mare & the hamlets of the eastern Amalfi Coast

Today's walk makes you discover the virtual unknown eastern part of the famous Amalfi Coast. From the charming town of Vietri sul Mare, the gateway to the Amalfi Coast back to the little fishing town of Cetara. Today, you will be walking along largely unknown paths, so you will see very few tourists. After strolling through the old town centre of Vietri sul Mare, and extensively browsing its many ceramics shops, you will walk down its little alleys to its marina, before heading up towards splendid Raito with its wonderful views of the coast. After a coffee break at Raito you then continue uphill to yet another charming little village – Albori. From here the path leads through the forests and lemon groves all the way to Cetara, one of the most charming villages of the Amalfi Coast. You will pass through grass and shrub land dotted with numerous wildflowers. Along the winding footpath you will also see some nice examples of local rural architecture. Towards the end of the walk you will enjoy the most wonderful view of the little fishing village of Cetara. You'll end up in the heart of the village and have the choice to settle right away in your room or you can go for a swim first. At night you have plenty of choices to enjoy a great meal in the village centre.

Accommodation: Hotel ** - Cetara – BB**

Total walking distance: 14,5 km. Approx. walking time: 5,5 h. Ascent & descent: + 600 m./- 900 m.

Day 4 The 'other', authentic Amalfi Coast – from Cetara to Maiori and Minori

In the morning we will first walk through the old centre of Cetara, one of the most authentic villages of the Amalfi Coast. Then we walk on to the little hamlet of Erchie (optional bus), from where the '*Sentiero dei Monaci*', (the '*Path of the Monks*') starts. This beautiful panoramic track is a real highlight, a second '*Path of the Gods*', but without the crowds. We will enjoy beautiful views of the Amalfi Coast and have many surprising views of the little valleys and bizarre rock formations of this part of the coast – including the so-called Capo d'Orso (Bear Cape), and the '*Uomo a Cavallo*' (Man on a Horse). Halfway the day we'll arrive in the tiny hamlet of Badia, with the stunning church of Santa Maria dell'Olearia. Shortly before arriving at Maiori, we will climb up again from the hamlet of Salicerchie towards the castle of San Nicolo de' Thoro Plano. Our path now follows one of the ancient pilgrim routes leading up from Maiori to the Avvocata Sanctuary. From here we can see into the valley of the *Reginna Maior* leading up to Tramonti, and understand why this castle has been so important for the defence of the coastal area. After heading down to the town centre, you could relax for a bit on Maiori's broad sandy beach, one of the area's finest, or opt for the final walk to Minori, along the beautiful '*Sentiero dei Limoni*', the '*Lemon Path*'. The path brings you through a wonderful terraced landscape underneath pergola's of lemons. After a short rest at one of the famous pastry shops (or a visit to the nice town centre and its Roman Villa, the biggest of the Amalfi Coast) we then take the boat to Amalfi. In the evening we can have dinner together in a nice local restaurant (optional).

Accommodation: Hotel ** - Amalfi – BB**

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



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

In the morning we will first walk through the Piazza Duomo and through the narrow white washed alleys of Amalfi. 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 white washed alleys. We take a spectacular walkway to the beautiful little town of Atrani, with great viewpoints over the town centre. From Atrani you proceed through the narrow little white streets and then up the 'Valley of the Dragon' (optional (private) bus) until we reach the beautiful medieval town of Ravello, definitely one of the highlights of the Amalfi Coast. Ravello not only has a very interesting history and many medieval monuments, among which the wonderful 'Duomo', but also offers beautiful views over the Amalfi Coast, and villas with stupendous gardens. We will of course pay an extensive visit to the historical centre and then dramatically located Villa Cimbrone, with its amazing gardens and the stupendous 'Terrace of the Infinite', one of the coast's most dramatic viewpoints. Then we walk back down to the coast. Through the charming hamlets of Torello and Castiglione, passing through the vineyards and lemon groves. we walk back to the little town of Atrani. 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. Those who want can further explore the town, and visit the Duomo and the Paradise Cloister. In the evening you are free to choose from a large choice of restaurants, ranging from simple pizzerias to exclusive restaurants.

Accommodation: Hotel ** - Amalfi – BB**

Total walking distance: 9 km. Approx. walking time: 4-5 h. Ascent & descent. +/- 400 m.

Day 6 – Amalfi & the Valle dei Mulini

In the morning we start to walk inland, and take a beautiful path up (optional bus) to the charming little village of Pontone, once a defensive stronghold for the Republic of Amalfi. Here we walk up onto the narrow ridge of the Torre dello Ziro that contains part of this medieval defence system, in a park-like landscape past shady pine trees and through fields of wild flowers, and enjoy stunning views across the Valle del Dragone to the gardens and villas of Ravello. A series of ascents and descent eventually brings us to the ruins of the Torre dello Ziro, known from the play 'The Duchess of Malfi'. From here we enjoy dramatic views of both Amalfi and Atrani, and the stunning coastline. We retrace our steps to Pontone, before walking into 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 lunch here in one of the best agriturismo's of the area, before returning to Amalfi. We will now also have the option to visit the fascinating paper museum, the Museo della Carta or opt for an interesting 'lemon tour'. 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 you travel back to your hotel, gliding by boat over the glorious Mediterranean.

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

Total walking distance: 7 km. Approx. walking time: 4/4,5 h. Ascent & descent. +/- 250 m.



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Alternative Day 6 or extra day : Along the 'Footpath of the Gods' to Positano.

In case you have an extra day, we recommend doing 'one of the world's greatest hikes', according to many guides. By private bus we drive up along a panoramic road, high above the coast, to the village of Bomerano, 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 amazing views over Positano and the Amalfi Coast (alternatively we 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. There's time for some private exploration. From Positano we then return to Amalfi by boat, which enables us to admire the impressive cliffs that we were walking over in the morning, from the sea. Here we settle in our centrally located hotel. In the evening we eat in a nice local restaurant.

Accommodation: Hotel ** - Amalfi (or Positano) – BB**

Day 7 Arrivederci !

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

Extra Day: By boat to Capri – discovery walk of the island. Optional relaxation in Amalfi.

In case you have an extra day, we recommend travelling 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 you make a 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 you past the amazing Villa Lysis and the ruins of the Imperial Villa Iovis, one of the villas of the Roman emperor Tiberius. You'll 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. You have a great picnic lunch in an amazing spot, after which you have time for a coffee or an ice cream. Walking back to the centre you have the opportunity to visit the Certosa and the Gardens of Augustus, where you can also opt to walk down to Marina Piccola, along the spectacular Via Krupp. This walk can be extended or shortened in many ways. You then travel back to Naples by boat late in the afternoon. In the evening we can all go out for dinner together, to perhaps the best pizzeria in town.

Accommodation: Hotel ** - Amalfi (or Positano) – HB (Dinner included)**



TOUR VARIATIONS

This tour is only one of the many different 'Authentic luxury tours' we can offer along the Amalfi Coast. Just [contact us](#) to know more about the possibilities.

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.

EXTRA NIGHTS

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 in Positano, Ravello, or elsewhere on the Amalfi Coast, Naples or Salerno, or a few days on the island of Capri (see below).

Several good accommodations are available. Details and prices on request.

At the beginning or the end of the tour there is the opportunity to visit Naples. 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.

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