



# Campania Felix

## *An Archaeologists' Paradise*

*A full immersion in Campania's history & archaeology,  
from prehistoric to Greek, Roman and medieval times.  
With selected walks through some of Italy's most amazing scenery.*



## TRIP NOTES 2019

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## INTRODUCTION

*The region of Campania marks the real beginnings of southern Italy, a sought-after place since Roman times when it was tagged the Campania Felix or 'happy land'. There is the great city of Naples, and amazing Roman sites, but also beautiful countryside, wonderful islands, like the world famous Capri, and of course, stretches of spectacular coastal scenery. The Amalfi Coast is definitely one of the most beautiful coastlines in Europe, with a long tradition as one of the premier tourist destinations in Italy.*

*Also the history of the region is fascinating. Well known for its archaeological and cultural heritage, amongst which several world heritage sites such as Pompeii, Herculaneum, Paestum, and many less well known places of large cultural value and natural beauty, Campania is a real paradise for those interested in the history of art and archaeology !*

*Our tour will show you not only the main archaeological highlights, but also aims at discovering less known and often overlooked sites, offering a panorama of the whole of Campania's archaeology, from prehistoric to recent times. To do this we will visit, with a specialist guide, several larger and smaller archaeological site, as well as take walks in parts of the region that occupy a special place in the history of the region.*

*First we visit the intriguing city of Naples, definitely one of the world's most interesting cities and more than worth a visit, notwithstanding all prejudices. A city with thousands of years of history, officially founded by the Greeks, which also boasts the world's finest museum on Greek and Roman archaeology and some amazing Baroque architecture. Here we walk along the main remains of Greek and Roman Neapolis and will discover the many treasures of the archaeological museum which houses one of the world's finest collections.*

*From Naples we then visit the Campi Flegrei, Baia and Cuma, but also Capri and its Villa Iovis. We do an extensive visit of Pompeii, the world's most famous ruins, which give a real life impression of how a Roman city looked like. Also we visit Mount Vesuvius, the volcano which caused the destruction of Pompeii.*

*The next part of our tour takes us to the Amalfi Coast where we discover the natural and cultural beauty of Amalfi and the industrial archaeology in the Valley of the Mills, location of Europe's first paper mills, almost a 1000 years old, fascinating Ravello with its amazing villas & gardens and several other charming medieval villages such as Scala, the oldest small town of the Amalfi Coast, Minuta and Pontone.*

*To end our tour we visit the Greek temples of Paestum, and the Lucanian and Greek sites of Moio della Civitella and Velia, hometown of the Greek philosophers Parmenides and Zeno, in the amazingly beautiful Cilento National Park.*

*On this tour, we take you beyond the crowds to experience the hidden treasures and authentic culture of this Italian paradise. You will discover the hidden charm of Naples, and many amazing 'minor' sites. And that with reason Capri & the Amalfi Coast have become world famous, but as well that it takes only a little effort to get 'off the beaten track'. Often only a few metres away from the crowds you will find yourself on the most intriguing locations, surrounded by nature. The real Italian paradise !*



*Please note: this is a moderately easy tour which is suitable for those who have some experience with walking and a good general physical condition. On most of the days we make some walks, mainly on good paths, but sometimes through uneven terrain. Average walking times: approx from 2 to 4 hours each day.*



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## DAY-TO-DAY PROGRAMME

### Day 0 Arrival Naples

*Arrival in Naples in case you want some extra time here. Several hotels can be booked here, ranging from 3 to 5-star, according to your wish (either 'downtown' or near the harbour or train station).*

*N.B. If you arrive a day earlier you have the possibility to visit some of Naples' wonderful museums or monuments which are not included in our tour, such as the Capodimonte Museum, Castel Sant'Elmo and the Palazzo Reale (Royal Palace).*

### Day 1 Arrival – Naples

Today you arrive in the bustling city of Naples. After settling in our centrally located hotel, in the heart of the historical centre of Naples you can already go for a short stroll through the colourful streets, soaking up its atmosphere, or visit a museum. In the afternoon we will meet with our tour guide and the rest of the group. Together we have an 'aperitivo', during which we'll attend a short introductory briefing on the tour. In the evening we go out for dinner in a nice restaurant close to our hotel.

*Hotel in Naples - Meals included: 1 dinner*

### Day 2 Naples city stroll and visit to the archaeological museum

On our first day we leave the hotel after breakfast to start a guided round walk through the old town centre. We will thread our way through the maze of alleys that are the heart of the city, touching several interesting 'highlights' such as the beautiful 'Galleria', the 'Duomo' and the royal theatre, but also through unknown lively (but safe!) neighbourhoods, with their unbelievable history, where you can find in a few square metres Greek, Roman and medieval buildings. We will stop off at the religious complexes of San Lorenzo Maggiore and of Santa Chiara, where we will visit the archaeological sites preserved underneath them, including a Roman crypto-portico and parts of a bath building. Then we have a nice lunch in a typical Neapolitan *trattoria*. After lunch we visit the world famous archaeological museum where all the artefacts from Pompeii and Herculaneum are exposed. Highlights of our visit to the museum, founded in 1777 by the Bourbon king Fernando IV, certainly are the Pompeian and Herculanean wall paintings, the mosaics originating from different archaeological sites around the Vesuvius, the Greek and Roman sculpture collections, and the materials originating from the excavations of the Greek town of Cuma and the Roman Villa of the 'Papyrus' at Herculaneum. After our visit to the museum we can freely enjoy some more of Naples lively street 'theatre' before heading back to the hotel to freshen up and prepare for dinner. Tonight we go for a short stroll to the best pizzeria in town (and already the pizzas in Naples are considered to be the best in the world!).

*Hotel in Naples - Meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 lunch, 1 dinner*

### Day 3 Visit to the Campi Flegrei : Pozzuoli, Baia, Cuma

This morning we head by local train to the 'Campi Flegrei' (Phlegraean Fields), a large 13 kilometres wide caldera, comprising 24 craters and volcanic edifices, that has been declared a regional park in 2003. The area is also of enormous archaeological importance as it contains the Greek colony of Cuma and several Roman towns and luxurious villas at Baia and Pozzuoli. After arriving at Pozzuoli we admire the Flavian amphitheatre, the 'Macellum' market building and the recently opened archaeological area of Rione Terra. We then transfer by private bus to Baia for a visit to its archaeological area preserving the remains of a Roman seaside resort. Baia also was an integral part of the 'Portus Julius', home port of the western Imperial Fleet of ancient Rome.



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We have lunch in front of the Bourbon villa, built by Luigi Vanvitelli in the Lucrino Lake. After lunch we then continue to Cuma, site of the first (8<sup>th</sup> century BC) Greek colony on the mainland of Italy. It was from Cuma that in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC Naples itself was founded. The ancient town is especially known for the sanctuary of the Cumaean Sibyl, the priestess presiding over the Apollonian oracle at Cuma. After having experienced the ancient atmosphere of Cuma we return to Pozzuoli where before heading back to Naples we will have a look at the volcanic 'Solfatara' crater with its active fumaroles. Dinner will be on your own tonight, as you are free to explore Naples' amazing choice of fine restaurants and *trattorie*.

*Hotel in Naples - Meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 lunch*

#### Day 4 By boat to Capri and discovery walk of the island

Today we travel by boat across the Bay of Naples, to the rightly famous island of Capri, the island where already the roman emperors liked to come as tourists, and that since then never lost its fame. We arrive in Marina Grande, the main harbour from where we walk up 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 a beautiful round walk around the eastern part of the island, which shows us 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 along the ruins of the Imperial 'Villa Iovis', one of the villas of the Roman Emperor Tiberius, the 'Arco Naturale', and of the 'Faraglioni', three rocks off the South coast, maybe the most famous and most painted rocks in the world. We have a great picnic lunch in an amazing spot, after which we have the 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 August, from 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. In the afternoon we enjoy some free time and possibly do some shopping before taking the boat back to Naples. Dinner will be had all together in a nice restaurant in the historical heart of Naples.

*Hotel in Naples - Meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 lunch, 1 dinner*

#### Day 5 Vesuvius National Park and Pompeii

This morning we travel south under the shadow of Mount Vesuvius, the volcano that with the fatal eruption of 79 AD completely destroyed the bustling city of Pompeii, creating the world's most fascinating ruins. We drive up the Vesuvius as far as we can, and then start an amazing round walk, completely different from the standard visit to the Vesuvius (and normally closed to the public), which makes you feel in a completely different world! The walk takes us along the impressive volcanic phenomena to be seen around the crater: lava flows, pumice fields and grotto's 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), from where we have the very best view of the Bay of Naples, one of the panoramic wonders of the world. We then descend to have a relaxed lunch on the slopes of Mt. Vesuvius, before travelling on to Pompeii. The perfectly preserved remains give us 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. We will 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. At the end of the afternoon we continue by private bus to the beautiful medieval town of Amalfi on the peninsula, our next base during our tour. In the evening we eat all together in a nice restaurant in the medieval town centre, close to our hotel.

*Hotel in Amalfi - Meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 lunch, 1 dinner*



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## Day 6 The historical heart of the Amalfi Coast: Amalfi, Atrani & Ravello

From Amalfi we take a bus up to the splendid medieval town of Ravello, one of the main highlights of the Amalfi Coast, where we have plenty of time to visit. Ravello not only has a very interesting history, and many medieval monuments, but also offers beautiful views over the Amalfi Coast, and boasts great villa's with stupendous gardens. After admiring the local 'Duomo', we pay an extensive visit to the dramatically located Villa Rufolo and Villa Cimbrone, with their amazing gardens and some of the coast's most famous viewpoints. After lunch we start our walk to the small town of Scala, reputed to be the most ancient centre of the peninsula. From Scala we continue to miniscule Minuta and then back down the very scenic endless old stairs through the vineyards and lemon groves until we reach Pontone, situated on a tall rock cliff dominating Amalfi and Atrani. Another weathered stone staircase sees us arriving in narrow white little streets of the beautiful little town of Atrani, one of the best preserved villages of the coast. After perhaps a glass on the square we can walk back to Amalfi passing along the coast. We can enjoy some more free time at Amalfi, visiting the wonderful 'Duomo' with the Paradise cloister, or just return to our hotel for some relaxation. In the evening we then all join for a 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.

*Hotel in Amalfi - Meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 dinner*

## Day 7 Amalfi and the Valle dei Mulini

Today we walk up from Amalfi to the charming little village of Pontone, gateway to the ridge of the 'Torre dello Zirro', from where we enjoy spectacular views on Amalfi and Atrani. First we have a great lunch with local specialties in Pontone, in the shade of the lemon trees. Then we walk slowly down into the 'Valle dei Mulini', the valley of the watermills, with its ruins of Europe's most ancient paper fabrics, 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. From here it's about an hour's walk back down to Amalfi, passing through the charming little back streets of the town centre. Once arrived at Amalfi we first visit the Paper Mill Museum, housed in a disused but fully operational 13<sup>th</sup> century paper mill. A short walk then brings us to the workshop of a local liquor stoker where we learn how the famous Amalfitan lemon liquor 'limoncello' is made – tasting included! Dinner will be on your own tonight, as you are free to explore Amalfi's amazing choice of fine restaurants and *trattorie*.

*Hotel in Amalfi - Meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 lunch*

## Day 8 The Greek temples of Paestum

After breakfast we head south to Paestum, world famous for the impressive ruins of its three Doric temples and listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site. After our trip along the Amalfitan Coast to Salerno and then past the Sele river plain, we first head to 'Hera Argiva', the first Greek settlement of the area, with an interesting interactive museum. A short drive then takes us to a local buffalo farm where after a short visit we lunch on its premises, tasting delicious genuine fresh buffalo mozzarella. After lunch we visit the archaeological site and its local museum where we admire the exemplary collection of prehistoric utensils, Greek vases and architecture and Roman sculpture. Not to miss the so-called 'Tomba del Tuffatore' (Diver's Tomb), rare example of Greek funeral painting. During our visit to the archaeological site we admire not only the famous temples, but also other monuments including the amphitheatre, the 'Heroon' tomb, several Greek and Roman houses and one of the towns' impressive gates. While the evening light colours the temples golden we finish our visit and head for our hotel, immediately near the site. Dinner is on the premises of our hotel tonight. After dinner we can make another short stroll along the temples and perhaps grab a *gelato*.

*Hotel in Paestum - Meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 lunch, 1 dinner*



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## Day 9 In the heart of the Cilento National Park : Velia and Moio della Civitella

Our last full day takes us into the largely untamed Cilento National Park to the coastal village of Ascea Marina, where we visit the remains of the ancient town of Velia. The Cilento National Park as well as the archaeological site are included in the UNESCO World Heritage list. The Greek town of Velia was home to the Greek philosophers Zeno and Parmenides, and cradle of one of Europe's most ancient schools of medicine. Amongst its remains one finds the celebrated 'Porta Rosa' (Pink Gate), one of the first examples of the use of the vault in Greek architecture. Other monuments worth exploring are the port, the Greek and Roman baths and the agora. The city's acropolis in medieval times has been reused as a local stronghold and preserves a magnificent medieval bastion. After lunch we head inland in direction of the foot hills of Mount Gelbison, where we visit at Moio della Civitella the fortified site of Lucanian, i.e. pre-Greek, origin. A short walk takes us through the remains to a small church on top of the hill from where we enjoy a wonderful view of the Cilento area. We then head back to our hotel in Paestum. You then have the time to relax a bit in its great garden, or have a swim in the pool. In the evening we dine on the premises of our hotel.

*Hotel in Paestum - Meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 lunch, 1 dinner*

## Day 10 End of the tour

The tour ends in Paestum after breakfast today. A private transfer can take us back to Naples or Salerno. A taxi transfer to other destinations can be arranged on request.



### LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

**Moderately easy (2):** Mostly easy walks, though some include walking uphill, sometimes on paths with rough surfaces. Be aware that along the Amalfi Coast several walks include walking a big number of steps! Extensions or shortcuts are possible on most days.

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



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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 are on a **B&B** basis. Most evening meals are included: we have selected the best available restaurants. On twonights you are free to choose from the wide choice of restaurants in the area. Your guide can give you good tips.

Not all (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 to have your lunch in a restaurant along the way.

### **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.*

### ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

**Arrival:** The tour starts in NAPLES, a city with an international airport, and connected with 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 on at PAESTUM. A taxi service (included) brings you to the train station, from where a frequent train service can bring you to either Salerno, Naples or other destination (e.g. Rome can easily be reached by train). Several taxi services are available to bring you directly to your next destination.

### INCLUSIONS

- Private English speaking tour leader for 8 days
- Accommodation: 4 nights Naples, 3 nights Amalfi, 2 nights Paestum in good \*\*\*/\*\*\*\* hotels
- Meals: 9 breakfasts, 7 lunches, 7 dinners (in great restaurants!)
- All private & public 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
- 24/24 h local assistance
- Luggage transport
- All gratuities for baggage, porters & hotel service

### Not Included

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



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## TOUR VARIATIONS

### EXTRA NIGHTS

**It is possible to include some extra nights before or after your tour.**

The tour can easily be extended with a few days in Naples or Salerno, on the Amalfi Coast or in the Cilento National Park (see below). Several good accommodations are available. Details and prices on request.

**For those who have never been to Naples an extra day here is strongly recommended. Not only for its stunning Museo Archeologico, but also to visit a number of stunning sites where the Greek & Roman past lives on in the city today. Check out our short '[Naples City Break](#)'.**

Also in SALERNO (a nice city with a beautiful 'centro storico') 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 relax in the countryside. Several superb accommodations are available. Details & prices on request.

### Bespoke Adventures

This tour is just an example of the tours we can offer. Many of these tours can be turned into tailor-made '[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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