



# The unknown Amalfi Coast

*Between the charming fishing villages and impressive monasteries of the world's most beautiful coastline*



## TRIP NOTES 2019

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*\*\*\*GENIUS LOCI TRAVEL - The Real Spirit Of Italy\*\*\**



## INTRODUCTION

*This is an exclusive tour along the eastern part of the well-known Amalfi Coast, one which only Genius Loci Travel, the Amalfi Coast specialists, can offer you. This tour lets you discover some of the real highlights that are still ignored by foreign tourism, despite the fact that (too) many tour operators worldwide now offer walking holidays along this coast. You start from Salerno, the provincial capital and a beautiful city by itself, and then walk along Vietri sul Mare, Cava dei Tirreni, the 'Madonna dell'Avvocata', Cetara and Maiori to Minori (with an optional extension to Ravello & Amalfi).*

*You will enjoy some spectacular coastal scenery, some of the most picturesque hamlets on the Amalfi Coast, just above the well-known Vietri sul Mare, the charming fishing village of Cetara and the great abbey of Cava dei Tirreni, once one of the most powerful abbeys in southern Italy. You'll walk across a variety of landscapes in real mountainous scenery, through chestnut forests, mountain meadows and bare rocky wilderness, terraced lemon groves and broad sandy beaches.*

*The tour starts from Salerno, a beautiful little city at the entrance to the Amalfi Coast. It was once a powerful city, as demonstrated by the fact that it boasted Europe's first medical university. But many other traces from its glorious past are also visible today. Its historical centre is full of interesting things to see, starting from its amazing Duomo.*

*Along the eastern coastline, as elsewhere on the Amalfi Coast, man has created a beautiful mosaic-terraced landscape, with vineyards and lemon groves. But here you will also find large areas of forest, both chestnut and evergreen oak varieties. And everything can be discovered on foot here too! The footpaths here are perhaps not as famous as elsewhere on the coast, but they 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 scrub and woods, living rocks and chestnut woods. This special tour shows you the paths most guides don't know about and most books don't tell you about!*

*This walking tour can be considered an extra treat for those who have already done the 'classic' tours along the Amalfi Coast, and already visited all the famous coastal towns and villages.*

*If you have never been there you can also consider this tour as a good introduction and extend the tour with one of our others along the coast. On this tour you will discover that the Amalfi Coast has become Italy's most famous coastline, with good reason but also that it only takes a small effort to get 'off the beaten track' and discover real hidden treasures or find yourself surrounded by nature.*



*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. 5 to 6 hours each day.*



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## DAY-TO-DAY PROGRAMME

### Day 1

Arrival in Salerno (train station). Your hotel is only a short bus ride away (optional taxi). After settling in at your hotel you can take your time to discover the beautiful town centre of Salerno and stroll along the lungomare with views of both the Amalfi Coast and the Cilento National Park.

**Accommodation: Salerno, Hotel \*\*\***

### Day 2

Today's walk takes you from the charming town of Vietri sul Mare, the gateway to the Amalfi Coast to the little hamlet of Corpo di Cava situated on the mountain slopes high above the valley of Cava dei Tirreni, on the other side of the Lattari Mountains. Indeed today, as well as during the next few days of your tour, you will be walking on paths largely unknown to the 'trekking' crowd. After strolling through the oldtown 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 takes you inland towards the valley of Cava dei Tirreni. After passing Iaconi and the church of San Vincenzo you will walk through shaded chestnut woods to your day's destination near the millennium-old Benedictine Abbey of Corpo di Cava. On your way you could have a look at one of the hidden marvels of this area, the remains of a Roman aqueduct still standing 20m tall! Finally you arrive at the hotel and have the time to freshen up and get ready for a hearty dinner on the hotel's premises. Those who feel like it can extend this walk with an optional loop through the wooded valleys beneath Monte Finestra.

**Accommodation: Cava dei Tirreni, Hotel \*\*\*\***

*Total walking distance: 7 km. Approx. walking time: 4 h.*

### Extra Day

*After a hearty breakfast you begin your walk into the mountains dominating the hamlet of Corpo di Cava and the 1000-years-old Benedictine Abbey. You could take your time to visit the abbey as well before starting your walk. Your aim for the day is the looming limestone mass of Monte Finestra, or 'Window Mountain'. This mountain takes its name from the hole piercing the saddle between its two peaks. Through thick chestnut woods, slowly making way for fragrant Mediterranean maquis, you climb up to the saddle of Foce di Tramonti. From here you will follow the mountain's crest towards its main peaks, admiring wonderful views of both the Amalfi Coast and the rolling valleys split between the steep mountains of the Lattari Mountain Massif on the one side, and the valley of Cava dei Tirreni, with its backdrop of the Picentini Mountains, on the other. Climbing up to Monte Finestra you will also be able to see Monte Sant'Angelo a Tre Pizzi, the highest peak of the Monti Lattari, and Mount Vesuvius dominating the Bay of Naples. On reaching the 'window' in the mountain, you start descending again towards the town of Cava dei Tirreni. Your route takes you down the steep slopes of the mountain to the hamlet of Sant'Arcangelo, where you then walk down the town's little alleys to its historical centre. After visiting the town you then take a public bus back up to your hotel in Corpo di Cava.*

**Accommodation: Cava dei Tirreni, Hotel \*\*\*\***

*Total walking distance: 7 km. Approx. walking time: 4 h.*

### Day 3

Today's walk will take you straight from your hotel along one of the most famous pilgrim routes in the area, to the Madonna dell'Avvocata, situated on a spectacularly panoramic balcony high above the Amalfi Coast. From the Benedictine Abbey of Corpo di Cava you first walk up through the golden chestnut woods to the little clearing of Cappella Vecchia, or the 'Old Chapel'. From here you enjoy a wonderful view of Vietri sul Mare and Salerno to the south, and the crest of Monte Avvocata to the west. A well-trodden and relatively easy footpath leading through the maquis then takes you to the hermitage of the Avvocata. From here one can see as far as Paestum and the mountains



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of Calabria to the south, while views of the Amalfi Coast reach as far as Ravello and Conca dei Marini. This is definitely one of the most beautiful belvederes on the entire coast, unknown to most, if not all foreign tourists! After visiting the hermitage you will then start walking down towards Cetara on the Amalfi Coast proper. Here you will pass through grass and shrub land coloured with numerous wildflowers. Along the winding footpath you will also see some nice examples of local rural architecture. Towards the end of the path you will enjoy the most wonderful view of the little fishing village of Cetara. A 10-minute walk along the main coastal road then takes you to your nicely located hotel where you will have dinner at the restaurant overlooking the sunset in the glorious Mediterranean.

**Accommodation: Cetara Hotel \*\*\*\***

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

**Day 4**

This morning you will take a public bus from the bus stop in front of your hotel to the little hamlet of Erchie near Cetara. From here you will follow a large winding dirt road first to the tiny rural hamlet of Badia, and then further on to Maiori. All along the first part of your route you 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!). Shortly before arriving at Maiori, you will climb up again from the hamlet of Salicerchie towards the castle of San Nicolo de' Thoro Plano. Your path now follows one of the ancient pilgrim routes leading up from Maiori to the Avvocata Sanctuary. From here you can see into the valley of the Reginna Maior River leading up to Tramonti, and you will 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, before walking the last short stretch to the charming seaside village of Minori and your hotel. In the evening you could go for a stroll through the village and perhaps visit the remains of the luxurious Roman villa preserved under the modern town.

**Accommodation: Minori Hotel \*\*\*\***

*Total walking distance: 7 km. Approx. walking time: 3 h.*

**Extra Day**

*This morning you walk from Minori along ancient footpaths and stepped alleys up to Ravello, one of the highlights of the 'classic' Amalfi Coast. You will follow a very scenic path past a number of medieval churches, climbing up to the small hamlet of Torello and then to Ravello itself. When you arrive at Ravello, once described by the French novelist André Gide as being 'closer to the sky than the seashore', you have to visit its two magnificent villas – the superb 11<sup>th</sup>-century Villa Rufolo, which once was a papal residence and later the home of Wagner, and Villa Cimbrone, a sumptuous 19<sup>th</sup>-century mansion with fabulous gardens and unequalled views over the Gulf of Salerno. Indeed Ravello's lofty position and sunny, dry climate has made it an appealing place for writers, artists, musicians and travellers. Boccaccio, DH Lawrence and Richard Wagner are among the more notable guests who have succumbed to its spells. Wagner composed parts of his opera 'Parsifal' while staying here. After visiting Ravello you have the choice of several different, but all equally beautiful paths leading down to the medieval town of Amalfi, once a powerful maritime republic and still the crown of the Amalfi Coast. You can opt to follow the Dragone Valley down to Atrani and then climb up again over the headland separating it from Amalfi, or you can choose to first walk to the hamlet of Pontone, with the magnificent Torre dello Ziro watchtower dominating both Atrani and Amalfi from above, before heading down into the centre of Amalfi. From Amalfi you then take a public bus back to Minori and your hotel.*

**Hotel \*\*\*\* - Minori**

*Total walking distance: 5 km. Approx. walking time: 3 h.*

**Day 5**

End of the tour. Return to Naples/Salerno by taxi, boat or bus. You are also able to book an extension to your tour.



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*Especially recommended is the 2-day extension which brings you into the green valley of Tramonti, 'inbetween the mountains', where you can taste the best wines of the area, walk through virtually untouched landscapes and stay in unique accomodations, completely 'off-the-beaten-track'. In case you book that extension you will be picked up from Minori on day 4 by aprivate taxi and brought to Tramonti.*

*The tour then continues as follows:*

### Day 5

Today you start a circular walk right from your hotel, that will give you the opportunity to discover an area relatively unknown to most travellers. Enjoy your breakfast and get ready to experience the pleasure of being a real traveller, in an area where virtually no other hikers go. You will pass through several small hamlets, all with their own charm. You will be walking also through ancient vineyards. The area of Tramonti boasts a production of excellent local wines, made with [autochthonous grapes](#), enriched by the scents and the aromas typical of this area (On request we can arrange a wine tasting for you). And finally you will walk an incredibly scenic part of the 'Alta Via dei Monti Lattari', the long distance trail that follows the whole ridge of the Sorrento Peninsula, high above the Amalfi Coast. Not to forget is that Tramonti is also famous for being the place where the pizza was invented, thanks to the natural vocation of its inhabitants for this delicious dish, cooked in their own oven together with bread and toasted bread. Dinner is free for you tonight, so you have the option to taste and experience a delicious pizza!

**Accommodation: Hotel in Tramonti**

### Day 6

For today you have several options for a shorter or longer walk. The longer walk brings you first through several charming hamlets belonging to the Commune of Tramonti, all with their own identity. Then you climb gradually up into the mountains through a beautiful mountain landscape, with great views over the valley of Tramonti and Maiori, on a trail with virtually no other tourists. For the shorter option you first go down into the valley, after which you start climbing up into the mountains. After a beautiful stretch uphill you reach the saddle between the valley of Maiori and that of Minori. Along the ridge you walk to the beautifully located church of San Nicola, a nice spot for a short break. Then you start descending, first through lemon groves and after that through a wonderful terraced landscape. You reach Minori, passing through the hamlet of Torre, and with a series of steps you walk down to the village centre. The walk is relatively short so In the evening you have to time for a swim and to go for a stroll through the village and possibly visit the remains of the luxurious Roman villa.

### Day 7

End of the tour. Return to Naples/Salerno by taxi, boat or bus. It is also possible to book an extension to your tour.



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## TOUR DETAILS

### ACCOMMODATION & MEALS

Accommodation is mainly on a half-board basis in 3/4-star hotels. All rooms have en-suite facilities. Dinners are included except on the first day when you have a wide choice of little restaurants and pizzerias in the centre of Salerno. No picnic lunches are included in the tour price. Materials for picnics can be purchased in the villages where you'll be staying or you can ask your accommodation holder to prepare a lunch packet for you.

**Night 1:** The first night you stay in a beautifully located Bed & Breakfast, or 3-star hotel near the historical centre of Salerno. All main monuments of the city can be easily reached from your accommodation.

**Night 2:** This night is spent in a comfortable 4-star hotel in the hamlet of Corpo di Cava, high above the little town of Cava dei Tirreni. From the hotel it is only a short stroll to the millennium-old Benedictine Abbey.

**Night 3:** Tonight you stay in room with a wide sea view in a beautifully located and welcoming hotel on the Amalfi Coast, near the fishing village of Cetara (at walking distance).

**Night 4:** The last night is spent in a comfortable hotel in the charming seaside village of Minori.

### UPGRADE/CHANGES IN ACCOMMODATION

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

### INCLUDED

- 1 night Hotel in Salerno \*\*\* - BB
- 1 night Hotel in Cava dei Tirreni \*\*\*\* - HB
- 1 night Hotel in Cetara \*\*\*\* - HB
- 1 night Hotel in Minori \*\*\*\* - HB
- 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 - if requested
- Drinks and meals not mentioned in the itinerary
- Optional additional tours or activities



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## LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

**Moderate.** In the extended programme there are some more difficult walks, which include some longer sections uphill, sometimes on paths with rough surfaces. Most of the trails are well maintained. Parts of the walks can be shortened and some longer options are available.

**Fitness:** High standard of fitness is not necessary but clients should be able to walk for up to 5 hours a day, even in hot and dry conditions. Some shorter and longer options are available.

## 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 SALERNO/VIETRI SUL MARE. Regular trains run between the town and most major Italian cities (Naples, Rome, Milan).

**Departure:** The tour ends after breakfast in MINORI on day 5. From here you can travel by bus to Salerno again. A taxi transfer from Minori can be arranged on request.



## TOUR VARIATIONS

### EXTRA NIGHTS

It is possible to include extra nights in any of the towns en route. Extra walking or sightseeing options can be provided as indicated in the day-to-day programme.

### EXTENSIONS

*Especially recommended is the 2-day extension which brings you into the green valley of Tramonti, 'inbetween the mountains', where you can taste the best wines of the area, walk through virtually untouched landscapes and stay in unique accommodations, completely 'off-the-beaten-track'. In case you book that extension you will be picked up from Minori on day 4 by a private taxi and brought to Tramonti (see above).*

It is possible to extend the tour with one or more nights in Amalfi or any other town along the Amalfi Coast. This tour can also be extended with one of our existing tours in the heart of the Amalfi Coast.



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