



GENIUS LOCI TRAVEL
Walking and Cycling Holidays

Independent 'self-guided' walking tour

Independent walking tour (AMST)

The Amalfi & Sorrento Coast-to-Coast Trek

*Along the 'Alta Via dei Monti Lattari' from Cava dei Tirreni
to the Finis Terrae of the Sorrento Peninsula*



TRIP NOTES 2024

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INTRODUCTION

The 'Alta Via dei Monti Lattari' is perhaps southern Italy's most beautiful long distance trail! It runs high above the famous Amalfi Coast, offering a different perspective of what is probably Italy's most beautiful coastline. The area boasts a stunning combination of picturesque coastal towns and mountains, an abundance of both culture and nature. The landscape is immensely varied and surrounded by infinite ever-changing views. It can be typically Mediterranean, intoxicating with its wild perfumed herbs, with myrtle shrubs, thyme, rosemary and mastic trees, but it can also be very mountainous, almost alpine, with lush beech forests, mountain meadows and bare rocks. This is the scenery you will discover during this stunning trek.

The route - which roughly follows the ridge of the Lattari mountains, the backbone of the Peninsula - leads from Cava dei Tirreni in the very East, to Punta Campanella, the very point of the Sorrento Peninsula. It roughly follows the ridge of the Lattari mountains, the backbone of the Peninsula. The scenery of this tour is therefore mainly mountainous, but there are several occasions to descend to the valleys, enjoying the incomparable mosaic-terraced landscape. 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. Beautiful little churches, ruins of castles and old farmhouses are found all over the place...

The 'Alta Via' of the Monti Lattari is definitely a must for the avid biker (just like the 'GR20' in Corsica). You will walk through real mountain scenery, past amazing sheer drops, through chestnut forests and attractive countryside, with wonderful terraced lemon groves and vineyards. You will stay overnight in the only mountain hut of the area. And you see cultural treasures like rural chapels, ancient farmhouses, old watermills and, every now and then, a herd of goats on your path! Walking in this area lets you enjoy some of the most splendid views on the Amalfi Coast and the Bay of Naples, while immersed in an almost alpine landscape. You will surely enjoy the rural scenery as well, which makes you feel like you're far away from the glamour of the fashionable places along the coast.

This amazing hiking tour will bring you to the highest peaks of the Sorrento peninsula, and along some stunning trails not many people walk! You will discover that the Amalfi Coast has become Italy's most famous coastline with good reason, but also that there are still places where you can be all by yourself, surrounded by nature.

And apart from the 'Alta Via' there are many other paths to discover! During this tour we offer you the possibility to walk also some of the 'famous' paths of the area too: the best parts of the "Sentiero degli Dei" (the "Footpath of the Gods"), and the thousand years old "Maestra dei Villaggi" – the 'main road' of the medieval Republic of Amalfi. This way you can also pay a short visit to the coastal villages which are must-see attractions: Amalfi, Ravello, Positano. And if you wish you can include a visit to Sorrento & Pompeii and perhaps do a great hike on Mt. Vesuvius and on the island of Capri too!



Please note: the 'Alta Via' is a moderately difficult (definitely not easy!) walking tour which is suitable only for experienced hikers, with a good general physical condition. The route is mostly along good paths, but there are several steep, rocky sections. Part of the route is waymarked, but elsewhere you have to find your own way, following our detailed route notes provided together with the maps. Average walking times: approx. 5 to 6 hours each day.



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DAY-TO-DAY PROGRAMME

Day 1 – Arrival in Salerno

Arrival in Salerno (train station/optional taxi from airport). After settling in at your hotel you can take your time to explore the beautiful medieval town centre of Salerno, visit the Duomo, and stroll along the 'Lungomare', the sea side boulevard, with views of both the Amalfi Coast and the Cilento National Park.

Accommodation: Salerno - Hotel/B&B ***

Optional extra day – Salerno & its castle

Directly from your accommodation right in the heart of the city, you start a great and rewarding round walk through the city centre, touching of course – but not only!- the most interesting 'highlights', such as the Duomo, the theatre, the narrow alleys of the medieval town centre, with its many noble palaces and churches with IX and X century fresco's. The literal highlight of today is the amazing Arechi castle, named after the Lombard prince who established his capital at Salerno in the 8th century. Views over the Amalfi Coast and the whole bay are stunning from here. Back down in town you'll discover the beautiful gardens of Minerva and the roots of the 'Scuola Medica Salernitana', Europe's most important medical 'university' in medieval times. The walk also brings you through quiet parks and the ideal end of the day is a stroll along the sea shore boulevard with a drink at the harbour.

Accommodation: Salerno - Hotel/B&B ***

Optional extra day: Pompeii & Mt. Vesuvius

With one extra day you can see two 'highlights' of the area: you'll make a stunning walk around the top of Mt. Vesuvius, the world's most famous volcano, dominating the Bay of Naples and you'll visit Pompeii, Italy's most famous archaeological site, situated under the looming mass of the Vesuvius volcano. The walk to and around the top of Mt. Vesuvius is stunning. You can peer into the main crater and enjoy marvellous views over the whole Bay of Naples, a panorama that runs from Sorrento and Capri to Ischia and Naples. You then travel down to Pompeii. Here you take your time to visit the extensive excavations and learn about how the Romans lived almost 2000 years ago. After the visit to the archaeological site, you can opt for a stroll through 'new' Pompeii, before travelling back by train to Salerno.

Accommodation: Salerno - Hotel/B&B ***

Day 2 – From Salerno to the Badia of Cava dei Tirreni, at the feet of the Lattari Mountains

Today's walk takes you from the charming town of Vietri sul Mare, the gateway to the Amalfi Coast (and famous for its ceramics) to the medieval hamlet of Corpo di Cava situated on the mountain slopes high above the valley of Cava dei Tirreni, at the feet of the impressive Lattari Mountains. After strolling through the oldtown centre of Vietri sul Mare, and browsing its 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 what is perhaps the most charming village of the Amalfi Coast: Albori. From here the path takes you inland. After passing Iacinti and the church of San Vincenzo you will walk through shaded chestnut woods. You'll pass at one of the hidden marvels of this area, the remains of a Roman aqueduct still standing 20m tall! Finally you arrive at the millennium-old Benedictine Abbey of Corpo di Cava. The 'Badia di Cava' is one of the most impressive religious monuments of southern Italy, and definitely worth a visit. If you arrive early, you can go for a visit already and do a short stroll through the charming village before walking to your hotel just above the Abbey. Then you have the time to freshen up and get ready for a hearty dinner on the hotel's premises.

Accommodation: Cava dei Tirreni - Hotel ****

Total walking distance: 7 km. Approx. walking time: 3 h. Ascent & descent: + 400 m./ - 100 m.



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Day 3 – From the Badia of Corpo di Cava to the Sanctuary of Monte Avvocata

Today's walk will take you straight from your hotel, along one of the most famous pilgrim routes in the area, to the sanctuary dedicated 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 Old Chapel. From here, you'll enjoy wonderful views over Vietri sul Mare and Salerno to the South, and the ridge of Monte Avvocata to the West. A well-trodden and relatively easy footpath, first through the shrub lands, then through the woods then takes you to the Avvocata Sanctuary. From here, you can see as far as Paestum and the mountains 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' of the entire coast, unknown to most, if not all foreign tourists! After visiting the sanctuary, you return along impressive rock cliffs to Corpo di Cava.

Accommodation: Cava de' Tirreni - Hotel ****

Total walking distance: 15 km. Approx. walking time: 5,5 h. Ascent & descent: +/- 800 m.

Optional extra days: Hike into the Valley of Tramonti

If you wish, it is possible from Cava to cross the ridge and hike into the green valley of Tramonti, where you can enjoy a day hike through pleasant rural scenery. In Tramonti, which literally means 'in between the mountains', you can taste the best wines of the area, walk through virtually untouched landscapes and stay in unique accommodations, completely 'off-the-beaten-track'. It is strongly recommended to spend one extra night here to do also the walk between the 13 different hamlets belonging to Tramonti, all with their own charm, a full immersion in the local culture. The area of Tramonti also boasts a production of excellent local wines, made with autochthonous grapes, grown on centuries old grapevines. You will therefore be walking through impressive ancient vineyards, typical of this area (on request we can arrange a wine tasting for you). From Tramonti you will then walk back onto the ridge, and continue along the 'Alta Via' the next day.

Accommodation: Tramonti - Agriturismo

Total walking distance: 13/17 km. Approx. walking time: 5/6 h. Ascent & descent: + / - 600 m.

Day 4 – Along the Monte Cerreto to the 'Rifugio' of Santa Maria dei Monti

You'll start with a private transfer to the Valico dei Chiunzi, on the ridge of the 'Lattari' Mountains, from where you can enjoy the view of both sides. You start your walk overlooking the valley of Tramonti and with the whole plain of Naples and Mount Vesuvius at your feet. Halfway the morning you reach the first peak of your route, Mt. Cerreto, the second highest peak of the area (1313 m.), from where you can enjoy a wonderful view of the Amalfi Coast with Ravello on one side, and the Bay of Naples, with Mt. Vesuvius and Naples on the other. Your route then continues at first downhill, after which it levels out and you'll enjoy a few hours of easy strolling. The last part of the walk brings you down to the beautifully located mountain hut of Santa Maria dei Monti, on a small high plain, overlooking the whole Gulf of Salerno, with Ravello and Scala at your feet. Those who want can even opt to walk down (and back up!) to Ravello. Tonight you dine on local specialties, directly on the premises of the mountain hut.

Accommodation: Santa Maria ai Monti (Scala) - Rifugio

Total walking distance: 12 km. Approx. walking time: 5 h. Ascent & descent: + 800 m./ - 350 m.

Optional extra day: Hike to Ravello & Amalfi

If you want to see some of the famous villages of the Amalfi Coast, you can opt for a beautiful roundwalk (but challenging to get back up!) You first walk down to Ravello, where you can walk around and perhaps visit the beautiful Villa Cimbrone, before walking down to the charming Atrani and Amalfi, a stunning historical town and the 'capital' of the Amalfi Coast, where you explore the quiet little back alleys with their strong Moorish influence and then perhaps go for a swim. There are two ways to get back to your mountain hut. The easiest way is a bus back up to Scala, followed by a short, uphill walk. The other route brings you through the nature reserve 'Valle delle Ferriere' and the 'Valle dei Mulini' with the ruins of Europe's most ancient paper mills, dating back to the 11th century.



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The walk penetrates deep into the valley, through spectacular scenery, underneath the towering cliffs, through an almost fairy-tale-like landscape with many beautiful waterfalls. A challenging path brings you back up to Santa Maria ai Monti.

Accommodation: Santa Maria ai Monti (Scala) - Rifugio

Total walking distance: 12-15 km. Approx. walking time: 5-7 h. Ascent & descent: +/- 1200 m.

Day 5 – From Santa Maria dei Monti to the Monte Faito

Today you walk towards the highest mountains of the Sorrento Peninsula. The central massive 'Monte Sant'Angelo a Tre Pizzi' ('mountain with the three peaks') offers a stunning scenery, with sheer cliffs, grottos and lush beech forests. First you walk back up to the ridge and then along gentle paths through the chestnut forests all around the valley of Agerola. Upon reaching the ridge views open up on the bay of Naples & Mt. Vesuvius again. The 'Alta Via' then brings you along the highest mountains of the area. You follow a challenging, but stunning path along the northern cliffs of the Monte Sant'Angelo and then climb up towards the small church of San Michele, on the edge of the high plain of the 'Faito'. The name 'Faito' refers to the extensive beech forests. As well is the area known for its 'neviere', where snow was stocked to supply the court in Naples with sorbets during Summer. Along the edge of the plateau, you then walk down to the 'Belvedere'. The views on the Bay of Naples are just grand! You settle in a welcoming mountain inn. At night you dine on the premises of the hotel. After dinner you can go for a short stroll to enjoy the starry night above the Bay of Naples.

Accommodation: Monte Faito (Vico Equense) - Hotel Sant'Angelo ***

Total walking distance: 14 km. Approx. walking time: 5 h. Ascent & descent: + 800 m. / - 500 m.

Day 6 – High above the Amalfi Coast: Monte Faito - Monte San Michele (1444 m.) - Santa Maria al Castello

From the high plain of Mt. Faito you hike to the highest peaks of the peninsula. Before reaching the 'Alta Via' you walk along the edge of the high plain, with stunning views over the Bay of Naples. Through the beech forests you climb up towards the highest peak of the area, Mt. San Michele (1444 m. above sea level – at only a mile from the sea shore!). After enjoying the best view on the Amalfi Coast, you follow one of the most scenic paths in western direction, with views from the Cilento National Park to Capri & the Bay of Naples. Then you descend into a nice wooded park like landscape, with cypresses and olive groves. A beautiful, easy last stretch brings you to Santa Maria al Castello, the old fortress defending the narrow valley between the Amalfi and Sorrento sides of the peninsula, with views to both sides. Dinner is on the premises of the agriturismo.

Accommodation: Santa Maria al Castello (Vico Equense) - Agriturismo

Total walking distance: 14 km. Ascent & descent: + 500 m. / - 850 m. Approx. walking time: 5 h.

Optional extra day: Positano seen from Above

Your agriturismo in Santa Maria al Castello is literally 1 mile away from Positano. You can walk down to this stunning little town along an amazingly beautiful route through the mountains above Positano, with the possibility to walk all the way down to the centre of the village and the beach. Following ancient footpaths through the forest and past marvellous viewpoints, you first walk from Santa Maria al Castello down to the Caserma Forestale (the forestry service hut). The walk then continues through a nice wooded area in a park-like landscape down to Montepertuso. Along another medieval mule track you can then continue down to Positano itself. For the return you have several options: to make it easy you can first you take the local bus up to Montepertuso, where you start a very scenic walk around the upper valley. Along a historical flight of stone hewn steps you then walk back up to Santa Maria al Castello.

Accommodation: Santa Maria al Castello (Vico Equense) - Agriturismo

Total walking distance: 7 km. + 350 m. / - 550 m. Approx. walking time: 4 h.



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Day 7 – From Santa Maria al Castello along Monte Comune to Sant’Agata sui due Golfi

Also today your trail starts directly from your agriturismo. At first you walk to a spectacular viewpoint with Positano literally at your feet. Then, along the edge of the plateau, overlooking Positano, you walk up to some of the most beautiful pastures in the area, green and covered with wild orchids, the high plain of Monte Comune. Then you continue to the ‘beacon’ of Monte Vico Alvano, after which a long descent brings you to the Colli di San Pietro and Colli di Fontanelle. From here you take a little path along the southern side of the ridge, now fully immersed in the Mediterranean colours and the lovely smells of the Mediterranean herbs. The path runs parallel to the seashore with spectacular views over the *‘Islands of the Sirens’*. Through the olive groves you then reach the little hamlets of Monticelli and Torca. From here you walk up along well maintained paths to 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: 14,5 km. + 600 m./ - 850 m. Approx. walking time: 6 h.

Day 8 – Roundwalk Punta Campanella

Today you’ll make a roundwalk over the ridge dividing the Bay of Naples from the Gulf of Salerno, discovering the very different landscapes and a number of charming small hamlets. Through pinewood, olive grove and orchards you walk down to the picturesque inlet of Marina di Crapolla (where Saint Peter is alleged to have disembarked on his way to Rome). Then continue along well-maintained paths to the charming little seashore village of Marina del Cantone, on the south side of the Sorrento Peninsula. The landscape is spectacular, dominated by dry-stone walls and olive groves, all the time overlooking the sea. Halfway the morning you reach the beautiful small bay of Recommone, where you can perhaps already opt for a swim. The next stretch is stunning: past the ruins of a medieval watchtower and over the rocky headland, you reach of Marina del Cantone. From here you follow the medieval steps up to the charming small hamlet of Nerano, a great place for a coffee break. Then you continue up to the church of San Costanzo, from where you have 360° views over both the Bay of Naples and the Amalfi Coast.

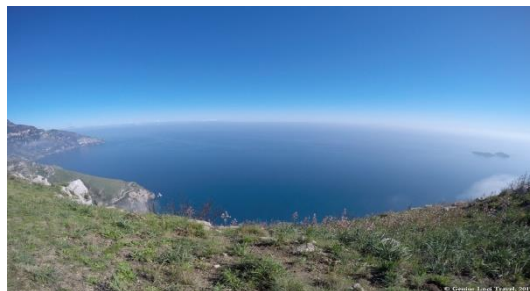
A spectacular path along the impressive cliffs, then brings you to the tip of the peninsula, where, according to legend, Ulysses erected a temple in honour of Athena. The return, from Punta Campanella to the village of Termini, is along the old Roman ‘Via Minerva’, with great views of Capri and a number of medieval watchtowers, which once protected the coast. A great conclusion for one of the best long-distance hikes in the Peninsula.

Accommodation: Sant’Agata sui due Golfi - Agriturismo

Total walking distance: 15 km. Ascent & descent: + 800 m./ - 900 m. (finishing at Termini) Approx. walking time: 6 h.

Day 9 – Departure

After breakfast you can easy return by boat or by bus and train to Naples, and then by shuttle bus to the airport. An extra night in a hotel can be booked upon request.



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TOUR DETAILS

ACCOMMODATION & MEALS

Accommodation is in 3/4-star quality hotels, good agriturismos and a mountain hut. All rooms have en-suite facilities, apart from the mountain hut in Santa Maria ai Monti. Here you will be staying in a shared room with a shared bathroom.

On almost all nights your evening meal is included, please check the inclusions below. 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.

UPGRADE/CHANGES IN ACCOMMODATION

It is possible to book an upgrade in some of the places en route.

INCLUDED

- 1 night in Salerno - Hotel *** - BB
- 2 nights in Cava de' Tirreni – Hotel **** - 1 x HB/ 1 x BB
- 1 night in Santa Maria dei Monti - Rifugio - HB
- 1 night on Monte Faito - Hotel *** - HB
- 1 night in Santa Maria al Castello - Agriturismo - HB
- 2 nights in Sant'Agata sui due Golfi - Agriturismo – 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
- Luggage transfer (*if not required a discount applies*)
- Private transfers as specified
- 24/7 h. assistance

NOT INCLUDED

- Visas & Departure taxes
- Travel Insurance
- Tourist tax
- Drinks and meals not mentioned in the itinerary
- Tips & items of personal nature

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

Moderate (3-4): Mostly moderate to challenging walks, on less frequented paths. Some steep sections, both uphill and downhill, sometimes on paths with rough surfaces. On some days extensions or shortcuts are possible.

Fitness: High standard of fitness is necessary. You should be able to walk for up to 7-8 hours a day - partly in the hot sun on dusty or stony tracks.



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Please note that on the hike of day 4 to the mountain hut at Santa Maria ai Monti you will have to carry all items needed for the overnight stay at the mountain hut in your daypack. In the meantime the rest of your luggage will be taken to the next hotel at Monte Faito.

If this is not for you, we suggest the alternative version of this tour hiking from Valico di Chiunzi to Agerola and stay there overnight at a beautiful agriturismo. The next day you then hike from Agerola to Monte Faito. Please contact us for details.

FOOTPATHS & WAYMARKING

Footpaths: Most paths are well maintained, but during the season some lesser used paths can get overgrown (*together with the local authorities we try to keep the paths clean – please help us by providing your feedback on the quality of the paths*).

Waymarking: Most 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.

ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

Arrival: The tour starts in SALERNO. Regular (high speed) trains run between this town and most major Italian cities (Naples, Rome, Milan).

Departure: The tour ends in SANT'AGATA. A frequent bus service can bring you to Sorrento, from where there are frequent trains and buses back to Naples. Taxis are available to bring you directly to your next destination.

TOUR VARIATIONS

INTERMEDIATE STAGE IN AGEROLA

In case you are not the “mountain hut” type and do not want to carry your own luggage on day 4 hiking from Valico di Chiunzi to the mountain hut at Santa Maria ai Monti, you can choose to hike the alternative route to Agerola instead and stay there overnight at a beautiful agriturismo (with luggage transfer included). The next day you then hike from Agerola to Monte Faito as outlined by the standard programme. Please contact us for details.

EXTENSIONS & EXTRA NIGHTS

This tour can also be extended with one of our existing tours in Sorrento, on the islands of the Bay of Naples or in the heart of the Amalfi Coast. It is possible to extend this tour with the traverse of the island of Capri, geologically speaking the continuation of the Amalfi-Sorrento Peninsula. A great add-on to this stunning hike! It is possible include extra nights in any of the accommodations *en route*. Extra walking or sightseeing options can be provided as indicated in the day-to-day programme. It is also possible to extend the tour with one or more night in Amalfi or any other town along the Amalfi Coast.



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SHORTER TREKS & GUIDED TOURS

On a shorter version of this tour you can hike the best parts of the 'Alta Via' – from Castellammare to Punta Campanella in only 5 days. On request we can also organise easier versions of this trek, e.g. during the more challenging winter season due to ice & snow. On request it is possible to have a local guide for all or some day walks. Guided tours can be booked for groups of 4 or more people.



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