



Amalfi Coast Walking Luxury Tour

*Amalfi & Ravello, 'Sentiero degli Dei', Positano,
Sorrento & Punta Campanella*



TRIP NOTES 2020

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INTRODUCTION

The Sorrento Peninsula has been a tourist destination for ages, certainly since the days of the Grand Tour and even as far back as Roman times. It has drawn royals, film stars and celebrities to its stunning coast line since Victorian times and its attraction is no less strong today. Huge cliffs tumble hundreds of metres into the turquoise Mediterranean sea to create an indescribably beautiful coastline, listed by UNESCO as a world heritage site.

In Victorian times Sorrento became a corner of paradise for many North Europeans, with the bright Mediterranean sunshine and dramatic fusion of mountains and sea helping them to forget the cold winter back home! Today Sorrento still exudes the same charm and elegance from its wonderful setting, looking out across the Bay of Naples, with Mount Vesuvius in the background – and the immediate surroundings offer many opportunities for great walks.

The southern side of the Sorrento Peninsula, the Amalfi Coast is probably Italy's most beautiful coastline. Protected from cold northern winds by its impressive mountains, it has a wonderful climate all year long, making this tour a great option for enjoyable walks even in early spring or late autumn. The landscape is immensely varied and surrounded by infinite ever-changing views. It can be typically Mediterranean, intoxicating with its wild perfumed herbs, myrtle shrubs, thyme, rosemary and mastic trees, or almost alpine with meadows and bare rocks. And there's an abundance of cultural heritage too! Man has created an incomparable mosaic terraced landscape. Beautiful little churches, ruins of castles and old farmhouses are found all over the place... The Costiera Amalfitana is definitely Europe's most dramatic stretch of coastline! And the best thing is everything can be discovered on foot!

This luxury tour in the realm of Italy's elite rewards you with fantastic panoramas, changing with every twist of the path as you walk around the tip of the peninsula. You'll enjoy the most spectacular scenery of the Amalfi Coast and get stunning views of the mythical Sirenuse (or 'Islands of the Sirens'), the nearby island of Capri, and across the Bay of Naples to Ischia, Procida, the city of Naples and of course Mount Vesuvius, dominating the bay. Behind you the Lattari Mountains plunge into the azure waters, and you get views over both the Bay of Naples and the Gulf of Salerno, the 'Due Golfi'.

There are thousands of footpaths here, some of which are famous, such as the Sentiero degli Dei (the Footpath of the Gods), or are at least a thousand years old, like the Maestra dei Villaggi – the 'main road' of the medieval Amalfi Republic. But there are many unknown trails which are just as beautiful as well! 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 scrubs and woods, living rocks and chestnut woods.

This walking tour can be considered the 'classic' tour, as it covers all the famous coastal villages and the most beautiful walks to be made in the area, some of which are frequently listed among the 'world's best walks'. You'll get the time to visit the must-see villages: Amalfi itself, but also Atrani, wonderfully preserved through the centuries, Ravello with its magnificent villas, quiet Praiano and of course the scenic and fashionable Positano. And further along the coast you take in some amazing stretches of unspoilt coastline towards Punta Campanella, the peninsula's 'Land's End', before making your way to the Sorrento area.



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Why go hiking the Amalfi Coast?

To see Amalfi in a travel -magazine is only to glimpse at its beauty: the coloured houses in chic Positano, the rugged mountain trails lined with chestnut groves and rosemary around Ravello; and the famed Path of the Gods above Positano are more than any page could cover. On this Amalfi Coast walking tour, you will experience it all yourself.

Approaching the Amalfi Coast is already a thrill, like arriving on a movie set. Sheer cliffs plunging into azure waters. Fragrant lemon trees, gelato stands, outdoor cafés, friendly faces. Your trip has barely begun and you already feel rewarded. This isn't just another vacation. It's six glorious days in the realm of Italy's elite. Luxuriating in decadent villas. Hiking on paths that few visitors find.

You will walk along well maintained footpaths and paved alleyways, through attractive countryside with wonderful terraced lemon groves, vineyards and cultural treasures like rural chapels, ancient farmhouses, old watermills and wonderful villas and villages, where you can sit down and relax with a drink. On this tour you will discover that the Amalfi Coast is fully deserving of its reputation as Italy's most famous coastline. But you'll also learn that you can find yourself at one with nature just a few hundred metres from the crowds – getting 'off the beaten track' couldn't be easier! All that's left is to wonder: when can you return to the good life on the Amalfi Coast?

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. Parts of the paths are waymarked. Elsewhere you have to follow the route notes provided together with the maps. Average walking times: approx 5 hours/day.

DAY-TO – DAY PROGRAMME

Day 1 – Arrival in Naples

Arrival in Naples (airport) or Salerno (train station). You are met by a taxi (optional) and brought to your hotel in Amalfi. Short visit to the town centre and maybe a swim to wash off the weariness of the journey.

Accommodation: Amalfi - Hotel ** BB**

Day 2 – The Torre dello Ziro & Valle dei Mulini

Today you make an initial easy walk, which immediately gives you a good idea of the amazing cultural and natural heritage of the Amalfi Coast. First you walk into the quiet little back alleys of Amalfi, where you can still notice the strong Moorish influence. An ancient flight of steps takes you up underneath the impressive limestone cliffs, towards the little village of Pontone, part of the medieval defence system of the town of Amalfi. The main point of interest is the marvellous Torre dello Ziro, located on a narrow ridge in a park-like landscape, with unforgettable views of Amalfi to the one side and Atrani to the other. This area also offers a number of marvellous picnic spots, all with dramatic views. Then, through the charming village of Pontone itself, you walk into the 'Valle dei Mulini', the valley of the watermills, with the ruins of Europe's most ancient paper mills, dating back to the 11th century. The comfortable footpath runs alongside the course of the river, in an abundant, green, almost un-Italian landscape. Those who feel like it can penetrate deep into the valley, through spectacular scenery, underneath the towering cliffs, through an almost fairytale-like landscape. Here you can admire a number of beautiful waterfalls. Then you return back down to Amalfi. The path gradually descends past a number of impressive ruins of what were once the first paper mills, adding a mysterious touch to the landscape. Along the last stretch the scenery changes to lemon groves and *maquis*. Back down in Amalfi you can visit the paper museum, before returning to your hotel. As the walk is relatively short you've still got some time left now to wander around in Amalfi or take your time for a swim.

Accommodation: Amalfi - Hotel ** BB**

Total walking distance: 9-10 km. Approx. walking time: 4-5 h.



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Day 3 – Hamlets of the Amalfi Coast

Today you first travel up to the charming historic village of Ravello, one of the most exclusive villages on the Amalfi Coast, and sought after by artists over the centuries as its lofty position and sunny, dry climate made it an appealing place to writers, artists, musicians and travellers from northern Europe. Boccaccio, DH Lawrence and Richard Wagner are among the more notable guests who have succumbed to its spells. Ravello not only has a very interesting history, and many medieval monuments, but also offers beautiful views over the Amalfi Coast. The French novelist, André Gide, once described the town as being 'closer to the sky than the seashore'. Ravello also boasts two magnificent villas - the superb 11th-century Villa Rufolo, once a papal residence and later the home of Wagner, and Villa Cimbrone, a sumptuous 19th-century mansion with fabulous gardens and unequalled views over the Gulf of Salerno. You can take your time to stroll through the village, before starting the walk back down to the coast. Past the dramatically located Villa Cimbrone and the hamlet of Castiglione you first walk through vineyards and lemon groves, then down some medieval steps to the beautiful little town of Atrani. This is certainly one of the best preserved villages on the coast, with the chance to look around the narrow little white streets of the town centre. The last short stretch to Amalfi is very scenic and has beautiful viewpoints over the town centre. As the walk is relatively short you've still got some time left now to wander around in Amalfi or go for a swim.

Accommodation: Amalfi - Hotel ** BB**

Total walking distance: 7,5 km. Approx. walking time: 4,5 h.

Day 4 – Along the 'Path of the Gods' to Positano

From Amalfi you have a private transfer up to the small village of Bomerano, on the Agerola high plain. Here starts the famous 'Sentiero degli Dei' ('Footpath of the Gods'), one of Italy's most famous footpaths, and certainly a walk with unrivalled views. After a very panoramic stretch with views over the whole Amalfi Coast, stretching out as far as the island of Capri, you reach the junction for the monastery of San Domenico, set in stupendous scenery, dominating the coast from its hilltop (an optional detour along a medieval pilgrim route is possible). You then continue on a more or less level path, through spectacular scenery with bizarre rock formations and luxurious vegetation. Here the 'Sentiero degli Dei' really lives up to its name! Through unique scenery with unrivalled views you reach the hamlet of Nocelle. Passing another spectacular valley you arrive in the little village of Montepertuso. After Montepertuso it's only a short walk down to Positano, but it will take you some time as there are many photo opportunities along the route. Positano itself is considered to be one of Italy's most beautiful villages, and certainly one of the pearls of the Amalfi Coast. After a stroll through its alleys, you settle in at your hotel in the centre, at walking distance from the large beach.

Accommodation: Positano - Hotel ** BB**

Total walking distance: 9 km. Approx. walking time: 4,5 h.

Day 5 – Positano seen from above

First you travel up to Montepertuso (or you start walking directly from Positano), where you start a very scenic walk around the upper valley of Positano. Following ancient footpaths through the forest and past marvelous viewpoints you climb up towards Santa Maria al Castello, the old fortress defending the narrow valley between the Amalfi and Sorrento sides of the peninsula. From here you can admire both the Gulf of Salerno and the Bay of Naples. Then there are several options to return to Positano, all along medieval mule tracks.

Accommodation: Positano - Hotel ** BB**

Total walking distance: 11 km. Approx. walking time: 4,5-5 h.



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Day 6 – The ‘Alta Via dei Monti Lattari’

After breakfast you can either choose to opt for a taxi or make the walk from Positano to the Colli di Fontanelle. This route partly follows the long-distance trail ‘Alta Via dei Monti Lattari’, and goes past the fortified church of Santa Maria al Castello, Monte Comune, the ‘sailor’s beacon’ of Monte Vico Alvano and the Colli di San Pietro. From the Colli di Fontanelle you take a little path, which runs parallel to the shore, with spectacular views. After a while the path descends quite steeply and then continues through olive groves towards the little hamlet of Torca. From here you can descend along well maintained paths to Marina di Crapolla (where Saint Peter is alleged to have landed on his way to Rome) where you are free to have a swim. Then head back up to Torca where you will be picked up by your private taxi and brought to your centrally located hotel where your luggage will be waiting for you.

Accommodation: Sorrento - Hotel ** BB**

Total walking distance: 5 km. Approx. walking time: 4 h.

Day 7 – Free day: Pompeii, Vesuvius or Capri

From Sorrento you can undertake several interesting excursions: a day-trip to the island of Capri or a visit to Pompeii, for example. There are also several nice options for an easy roundwalk, and perhaps a swim. A beautiful walk brings you to Capo di Sorrento, and from there down to the great Roman villa on the headland. This was also Queen Joanna’s favourite bathing place, a beautiful little bay. Depending on whether you want to extend the walk you can reach the small fishing village of Marina di Puolo, before returning to Sorrento for a last great evening meal.

Accommodation: Sorrento - Hotel ** BB**

Total walking distance: 4 km. Approx. walking time: 3,5 h.

Day 8 – Departure

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



TOUR DETAILS

ACCOMMODATION & MEALS

For this tour we can offer you a large selection of 'Premiere Inns', very good hotels, of which several among the world's best hotels, as acclaimed from Condé Nast Traveler, Travel+Leisure and many others.

Genius Loci Travel, as the leading adventure travel company on the Amalfi Coast & the Bay of Naples, can book your room in any hotel you could dream of! All rooms have en-suite facilities (of course!).

You will be free to choose from the wide choice of restaurants in the area for your dinner in the evening. Your accommodation holder can give you good tips. Also can we make dinner reservations for you, to ensure you the special place at the special restaurant of your choice (on request).

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 shops on the island. Also is it possible on several occasions to have lunch in a fine restaurant.

Nights 1, 2 & 3: The first three nights are spent either at Amalfi, the ancient capital of the Amalfi Coast, in a beautiful 4-star hotel in the heart of the village (at walking distance from the sea and all major monuments of the medieval town centre) or in beautiful Atrani, the most authentic village of the coast, and much more peaceful. On request a 5-star hotel can be booked.

Nights 4 & 5: The next two nights are spent in the romantic & fashionable little village of Positano, with its characteristic houses built onto the steep slopes of the mountains. You stay either in a beautiful 4-star hotel, at walking distance from the seashore (along Positano's charming little streets), or in one of the stunning 5-star hotels.

Nights 6 & 7: The last two nights are spent in beautiful Sorrento, with its charming historic centre and great parks and terraces overlooking the Bay of Naples. You stay either in a beautiful 4-star hotel located in the heart of town and at walking distance from the train station and harbour, or in one of the other hotels of your choice.

Suggested Accommodation

The choice of a hotel is something personal. We at Genius Loci Travel are proud of our selection of accommodations. As stated by some of our clients: one of our strengths lies in the careful selection of the right accommodation for the type of tour, the type of clients and the type of area. Not the obvious places, but small, well-situated, often family-run places, with a personal welcome. Our accommodations are often small boutique hotels, but can be wonderful Bed & Breakfasts (yes, this is the Italian word!), as well as agriturismo's, rural accommodations, which are often real countryside Relais. All are chosen for their accessibility to the trail and for the warmth of their welcome. Many are located in historical buildings or placed in exceptional spots. All give you the feeling of being truly in Italy, and not in just another hotel anywhere in the world. All represent the best price/quality ratio the area offers and they all employ local people.

On the whole and for these reasons we try to avoid chain and big name hotels. Many of our hoteliers are walkers themselves and take an active interest in our clients' progress. Most of the places we have been using for many years and therefore a good working relationship.

*For this 'Luxury Amalfi Coast Walking Tour' we might make several suggestions for an unforgettable stay: for those who like an historical ambiance in Amalfi we would opt for the **Hotel Luna** or **Hotel Palazzo Ferraioli** (Atrani), in Positano for **Hotel Palazzo Murat**, and for **Hotel Imperial Tramontano**, **Palazzo Guardati** or the **Grand Hotel Continental** in Sorrento. Some more temporary luxury can be found in **Hotel Marina Riviera** in Amalfi, in **Hotel 'Casa Angelina'** in Praiano, or in **Hotel Pasitea** or **Hotel Le Sirenuse** in Positano. For those who want the absolute top, and also the historical ambiance, we would recommend **Hotel Santa Caterina** in Amalfi and **Hotel Bellevue Syrène** in Sorrento. Details and prices on request.*



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INCLUDED

- 3 nights Hotel in Amalfi **** - BB
- 2 nights Hotel in Positano **** - BB
- 2 nights Hotel in Sorrento **** - BB
- 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

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

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

Moderately easy (2): Mostly easy walks, though some involve uphill walking, sometimes on paths with rough surfaces. On some days there are stretches that are difficult for those suffering from vertigo (but NOT dangerous !). On these days alternative options are available. Extensions or shortcuts are also possible on all days.

Fitness: High standard of fitness is not necessary but you should be able to walk for up to 4 hours a day in the hot sun, sometimes on dusty or stony tracks.



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FOOTPATHS & WAYMARKING

Most paths are well maintained, but during the season some minor 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*). Many parts of the route that you follow are paved alleyways.

Waymarking: 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. In case you don't feel confident a local guide can be provided for some trails.

ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

Arrival: The tour starts in AMALFI, connected to Salerno by a frequent bus (and boat) service and with Naples by a less frequent bus service. In the summer there are direct boats from Naples. A taxi pick-up service can be arranged either from Naples (airport or train station), or from Pompeii or Castellammare di Stabia, which can both be easily reached from Naples with the local Circumvesuviana train.

Departure: The tour ends in SORRENTO. A frequent train service can bring you to Naples, while a frequent bus service can bring you directly to either Naples Airport or Piazza Garibaldi train station. Several taxi services are available to bring you directly to your next destination.

EXTRA NIGHTS

It is possible to include extra nights in any of the accommodations en route. *Extra walking or sightseeing options will be provided !!!*

At the beginning or the end of the tour there is also an opportunity to visit Naples and/or Pompeii, or spend some time on the beach. The tour can easily be extended with a few days in Naples or on the island of Capri (see tour variations). Several good accommodations are available. Details and prices on request.



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