



Cilento Coast

Kayaking along the coast of the Sirens

*Agropoli, Castellabate, Punta Licosa, Acciaroli, Pisciotta & Palinuro,
Marina di Camerota, the 'Infreschi' Coast, Scario & Policastro*



9-day Sea Kayaking Adventure



TRIP NOTES 2023

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INTRODUCTION

The region of Campania marks the real starting point of southern Italy. It has been sought after since Roman times when it was labelled the Campania Felix, or 'happy land', hardly a surprise considering the fact that it includes the great city of Naples, beautiful countryside, Roman ruins, small islands and stretches of spectacular coast. On the southern side of the Sorrento Peninsula, the Costiera Amalfitana is probably one of Europe's most well-known and dramatic stretches of coastline, with its towering cliffs and picturesque coves.

But Campania's real secret is located south of Salerno, and immediately south of the wonderful Greek temples of Paestum. Here the coastline bulges out into an expanse of mountainous landmass known as the Cilento, now a National Park with World Heritage listing, an area which can be considered as the real 'authentic' southern Italy.

The Cilento coast is fairly rocky territory, with the crystalline sea lapping at the shore. There is a wild kind of beauty here; rocky ridges set between small picturesque inlets and richly scented pinewoods backing onto wide sandy beaches. Aleppo pines loom over the multicoloured undergrowth of myrtle and cactuses; whilst huge, centuries-old olive trees grow right down to the shore. Inland the Cilento is largely undisturbed by the 21st century and you enjoy visiting medieval and quaint fishing villages where the traditional way of life is still evident.

This tour follows the whole coast, from the pretty town of Agropoli in the North, along the mythical headlands of Leucosia, Cape Palinuro and Camarota, all named after nymphs or heroes of the classic Greek and Roman myths.

You will go ashore in some of the nicest old fishing villages, like Agropoli, Santa Maria and San Marco di Castellabate, Acciaroli, Pioppi, Marina di Pisciotta, Marina di Camerota and Scario. But you will also have the chance to visit some of the villages immediately inland and enjoy a stroll through attractive countryside, with all their cultural treasures like rural chapels, ancient farmhouses, old watermills, ancient olive groves and charming medieval villages.

On this amazing kayaking adventure you will explore the entire coastline of the Cilento National Park, one of the biggest and most diverse of Italy. You will see that some parts, like Acciaroli and Palinuro, for a reason have become famous seaside resorts, but also that it takes only a little effort to get 'off the beaten track'.

At only a few hundred metres away from the crowds, you will find yourself surrounded by nature. On this tour we take you beyond the crowded beaches, and you'll be lying on isolated beaches and paddling alone with the seagulls.... In short, you'll discover a real Italian paradise.



Please note: this is a moderately easy tour which is suitable for those who have some experience with sea kayaking and a good general physical condition. Average (net) kayaking times: approx. 4-5 hours each day.



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DAY-TO-DAY PROGRAMME

Day 1 Arrival – Agropoli

In the early afternoon you are being picked up from the airport or train station (Agropoli, Paestum or Salerno) by private car and brought to the charming small fishing harbour of Agropoli, the entrance gate to the Cilento national Park. The very scenic old town, dominated by its castle, is located on a big rock outcrop, which we can explore from the sea. You can settle in your beautiful hotel on the beach, just below the historical town centre and perhaps go for a swim or a stroll through the old town. Towards the end of the afternoon we meet our tour leader and the rest of the group. After a brief introduction of the tour, we will outfit everyone with paddle and PFD and offer some basic kayaking instruction. Then we go for a short introduction trip, around the ‘*akropolis*’ of Agropoli itself. After the paddling we go for a short stroll through the colourful streets, soaking up its atmosphere. Then we have our relaxed ‘*aperitivo*’ on the beach and return to our hotel. In the evening we eat all together in the nice restaurant right on the beach, overlooking the Mediterranean.

Accommodation: Agropoli - Meals included: 1 ‘aperitivo’, 1 dinner

Day 2 From Agropoli along the headland of Punta Tresino to Castellabate

In the morning we will first have a great breakfast in our garden and then we walk down to the harbour. Here we thoroughly check again all our gear, before going for our first kayaking day trip. There are many available options for the day, according to your level of interest, paddling skills, and of course the weather! We’ll start paddling along the amazing coastline in southern direction today. The coastline here is a stupendous alternating scenery, ranging from impressive bare cliffs, to terraced vineyards and isolated small beaches. We’ll make a first stop on the beautiful sandy beach of Trentova, where we can make a short ‘biscuit stop’ (a drink and a snack). We’ll then paddle around the headland of ‘Punta Tresino’, named after a siren who drowned here. There are several interesting inlets to visit, in one of which the signs of the Greek quarries (who excavated the rocks for the pillars of the temples of Paestum here) are still clearly visible. After a few miles of rocky shore we’ll arrive at the sandy beach of Lago, where we can have our (picnic) lunch and a swim. Then we continue in southern direction along the now sandy beach to reach the beautiful village of Santa Maria, built on Greek and Roman foundations. We go ashore in the picturesque small harbour, where we can enjoy an ‘*aperitivo*’, before paddling the last few miles to San Marco di Castellabate, where we settle in our hotel, and perhaps take the chance to use southern Italy’s most innovative wellness centre. Tonight we’ll have dinner on the terrace of the hotel, overlooking the harbour.

Accommodation: San Marco di Castellabate - Meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 dinner

Day 3 From Castellabate along Punta Licosa and the ‘Red Rocks’ to Agnone

Today's sea kayaking will be a beautiful day, which will take us along one of the most amazing stretches of coastline of the Cilento National Park. We start paddling in western direction today, leaving the small village of San Marco behind, heading for Punta Licosa. The headland of Licosa is the point where Cilento reaches furthest out to sea, like a miniature reproduction of the Monte Stella peninsula. It is full of marine charm, a place where the sea breeze makes the trees dance, bound to Ulysses’ myth: people say that the Siren Leucosia drowned herself here after failing to bewitch Ulysses. This myth and the marvellous landscape make this area a really enchanting place to visit in every season of the year. In wintertime the clear sky offers you superb views over the Amalfi Coast and Palinuro; in springtime the flowering brooms cover the hill in a golden-yellow hue, and during the summer you can swim in the very clean sea, while in autumn the sea is still warm. We’ll make a short stop at a beach in the shade of the pine forest, or alternatively go ashore on the small island of Licosa, just off the coast. Then we pass the several medieval watchtowers around the hamlet of Ogliastro Marina, and get the chance to go ashore on a beautiful sandy beach. The next stretch brings us underneath the towering cliffs of the Ripe Rosse, after which we shortly reach the charming village of Agnone. Here we settle in our hotel, right on the beach. For dinner we can opt to go to eat at the hotel itself, or we can eat in another nice restaurant in the village.

Accommodation: Agnone - Meals included: 1 breakfast



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Day 4 From Agnone along Acciaroli and Pioppi to Casalvelino

Today we continue in southern direction, with great views on Mt. Stella and the medieval villages scattered on its slopes. South of Agnone is the paradise of beach lovers: long sandy beaches stretch all the way south to beautiful Acciaroli, a characteristic fishing village, one of Ernest Hemingway's favourite places. We take some time to explore the old town of Acciaroli and perhaps have a drink at the harbour, before paddling around the rocky headland to charming Pioppi, where we go ashore underneath its medieval castle. Now we are in the reign of the 'Mediterranean Diet', an area where people live longer than average, probably due to the healthy food and 'slow' lifestyle. Here we can enjoy lunch, visit the aquarium and the small museum on the 'Dieta Mediterranea' and make a short stroll to a very peculiar bar for a coffee or a drink.. A last short stretch then brings us to Casalvelino, along the now again rocky shore. A must-stop place is the 'Marina' of Casalvelino, a perfect stop for a well-deserved 'aperitivo'. We are picked up from here and brought to our accommodation for the night. A great 'agriturismo', where we will dine on amazing local produce.

Accommodation: Casalvelino - Meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 dinner

Day 5 From Casalvelino along Greek Velia to Pisciotta

After a leisurely breakfast in the garden of our agriturismo we go down to the beach and get into our kayaks again. We'll follow the sandy coastline in southern direction, heading for the medieval watchtower of Velia, dominating the old Greek city. If we want we can go ashore to pay a visit to this unknown, but very interesting site. We then continue along the sandy shore, which abruptly ends at the headland of Punta Telegrafo, where we can again explore some sea grottos and land on isolated beaches. Here we'll eat lunch, and perhaps go for a swim. Then we continue the last stretch to Marina di Pisciotta, a charming little harbour, where fishermen still catch anchovies with the millennia old Greek system, called la 'Menaika'. We'll sleep in the old town, right above us, in a stunningly located hotel, overlooking the glorious Mediterranean. In the evening you can enjoy a nice evening meal in one of the small nearby restaurants.

Accommodation: Pisciotta - Meals included: 1 breakfast



Day 6 From Pisciotta along the mythical Cape of Palinuro to the beach of 'Buondormire'

In the morning we will first have a great breakfast on our beautiful terrace, after which we walk down to the harbour, or we take the charming open taxi. We continue paddling in southern direction today, heading for the mythical headland of Palinuro, named after one of the shipmates of Aeneas. Capo Palinuro is a promontory of sheer limestone cliffs, with many sea grotto's, one of which is the beautiful Grotta Azzurra, not as famous as the one in Capri, but even more beautiful. The first part of our route brings us along rocky shores, covered with forest, maquis and olive groves, with the occasional pebbly beach. Then we reach the sandy beach of Caprioli, where we can go ashore for a short coffee break. We continue in southern direction and soon we reach the area of the Saline, old sandpans, already used in Greek times. We can go ashore at the small beach of Ficocelle and walk up to the small archaeological museum, where all the artefact of Greek and roman times found near the seashore can be admired. A few miles further we land on the small sandy beach in the harbour of Palinuro, where we can have lunch.



From Palinuro harbour you can make a beautiful short walk, which climbs up to the top of the headland. Worth it for the views over the whole coastline, with the Amalfi coast and Capri in the back. Then comes the most spectacular part of the journey, the circumnavigation of Cape Palinuro. We'll paddle underneath the impressive limestone cliffs, surrounded by seagulls. We might enter the Grotta Azzurra and perhaps another sea grotto. Towards the end of the afternoon we go ashore in one of the most beautiful beaches of the Cilento, the '*Spiaggia del Buondormire*'. Here we dock our kayaks and go for a swim, before walking up the step to our beautifully located hotel, just above the cliffs. Tonight we'll enjoy a nice dinner in one of the greatest spots of the Cilento: our terrace overlooking the whole South Coast of the Cilento.

Accommodation: Palinuro - Meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 dinner

Day 7 From Palinuro to Marina di Camerota

Today's sea kayaking is easy, only a short stretch to go. But it will take us along some of the most beautiful beaches, with many occasions to stop for a drink, a swim and, why not, a short hike inland. After breakfast we'll walk down to our 'private beach' and get into our kayaks. First we'll paddle around the characteristic rock just off the shore, locally known as the 'Rabbit'. After that we continue to the popular beach of Marinella, with its beautifully shaded bar. A short (optional) hike can bring you from here onto the headland of 'La Molpa', with the remains of a medieval castle. Along this part of the coastline of the Cilento National Park, a number of prehistoric settlements has been discovered, some quite recently. We'll go ashore near the 'Grotta delle Ossa', where many bones of animals were found. The next stop is the beautiful beach underneath the Arco Naturale, a stunning rock formation. We continue paddling along the sandy coast from there, one of the most popular beaches of the southern Cilento, with many possibilities to go ashore for a sandwich and a drink. The coastline then becomes rocky again, and just before arriving in the charming village of Marina di Camerota we'll find a number of beautiful inlets. We'll go ashore in one of these, where we'll dock our kayaks and walk to our nice hotel. Tonight you stay in a nice hotel in the village centre, with a swimming pool, but also at just a few hundred metres from the crystal-clear sea. You'll enjoy dinner in the nice garden.

Accommodation: Marina di Camerota - Meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 dinner



Day 8 From Marina di Camerota along the 'Infreschi' Coast to charming Scario

We'll get an early start as the day's sea kayaking will take us along one of the most beautiful stretches of coastline of the Cilento National Park, the so-called '*Costa degli Infreschi*', a virtually untouched coastline, not without reason a protected marine area. But first we can go ashore in the charming village of Marina di Camerota, with its clear South American influence. After a short visit we then start paddling in eastern direction. From the harbour a first stretch brings us past a series of grottos and beaches, after which we reach the medieval watchtower. This watchtower marks the beginning of the Costa degli Infreschi, one of the most unspoilt stretches of coastline in southern Italy, with the cleanest seawater (Blue Flag). There are several beautiful inlets, reminiscent of the isolated beaches on a tropical island. Another stretch along the beautiful coast brings us to the Porto degli Infreschi. This is the place which gave its name to the whole coast: there is a Roman harbour, with a freshwater spring in a grotto. Of course we go ashore here, and also do we enter the grotto where we can do some sea kayaking in sweet water (and drink directly out of the sea!).



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We then continue along the wildest part of the coast, with no places to go ashore, until we reach the beach of Marcellino. Here we have a great lunch, some music, and a bit of relax, before continuing to the charming village of Scario, our last stop, the final destination of our kayaking tour. Upon arrival on the beach here we'll have a drink and make a stroll through the village, before being brought to one of the most stunning viewpoints of the whole Cilento National Park. Views from here not only reach the whole coastline, including Basilicata and Calabria, but can reach even the Aeolian Islands and Sicily. At night we'll stay in a nice family run hotel, and dine on local specialties.

Accommodation: San Giovanni a Piro - Meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 lunch, 1 dinner

Day 9 Scario (San Giovanni a Piro)

The tour ends in San Giovanni a Piro after breakfast today (unless you booked an extension –strongly recommended). You can be brought to the railway station of Policastro at any time.



OUTLINE ITINERARY

Day	Itinerary & Activities		Distance
1	Arrival in Agropoli. Introduction trip	Agropoli	2-3 miles
2	From Agropoli along Punta Tresino to Castellabate	Castellabate	8 miles
3	From Castellabate along Punta Licosa to Agnone	Agnone	9 miles
4	From Agnone along Acciaroli and Pioppi to Casalvelino	Casalvelino	9,5 miles
5	Paddling from Casalvelino along Greek Velia to Pisciotta	Pisciotta	9 miles
6	From Pisciotta along the mythical Cape of Palinuro to the beach of 'Buondormire'	Palinuro	11 miles
7	From Palinuro to Marina di Camerota	Camerota	8-10 miles (many options possible)
8	From Marina di Camerota along the 'Infreschi' Coast to Scario	Scario	12 miles



TOUR DETAILS

ACCOMMODATION & MEALS

All nights are spent in a beautiful characteristic 3 & 4-star hotels (generally our tours are 3/4-star level; we can book superior 4/5-star on request). All rooms have en-suite facilities.

Breakfast is included, in all accommodations. A number of evening meals is included, for which we have selected the best available restaurants.

Also some (picnic) lunches are included in the tour price. On one day we enjoy a picnic on the beach, while on other days we'll have a nice lunch in a small restaurant on a nice small beach.

INCLUDED

- Private English speaking tour leader for 9 days
- Professional guiding service for each activity
- Accommodation in beautiful ***/**** hotels:
1 night Agropoli + 1 night Castellabate + 1 night Agnone + 1 night Casalvelino + 1 night Pisciotta + 1 night Palinuro + 1 night Marina di Camerota + 1 night Scario (San Giovanni a Piro)
- Meals: 8 breakfasts, 6 dinners, 1 lunch
- All private & public transfers as indicated throughout the entire itinerary
- Rental of high-quality sea kayaks
- Group equipment and technical gear for each activity
- Entrance fees of all sites along the itinerary
- Special activities as outlined in the day-by-day itinerary
- 24/24 h local assistance
- Luggage transport
- All gratuities for baggage, porters & hotel service

NOT INCLUDED

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



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LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY / REQUIRED SKILLS

Moderately easy (level 2):

This tour is suitable for kayakers with a minimum of sea kayaking experience. Our helpful guides/instructors will work with you to help you learn a new sport or become more comfortable with the outdoors. The waters of the Mediterranean are usually calm, and you'll encounter only short open water crossings.

Fitness: A good standard of fitness is necessary. You should be able to paddle for up to 3-4 hours.

ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

Arrival

The tour starts in AGROPOLI, a town with a train station, very well connected with Rome and all other major Italian cities by a frequent (high speed) train service. The nearest city with an international airport is NAPLES. The nearest big city is SALERNO. A taxi pick-up service from Agropoli (train station) is included in the tour price. Taxi transfers from Naples (airport or train station) or other places can be arranged on request.

Departure

The tour ends after breakfast on day 9 in SCARIO. A taxi transfer to Policastro (train station) is included in the tour price. From here a frequent train service can bring you back to Salerno, from where you travel to your next destination (Naples and Rome can easily be reached by train). Several taxi services are available to bring you directly to your next destination.

TOUR VARIATIONS

It is possible to include some extra nights before or after your tour, in any of the accommodations 'en route'. For those who love hiking too, a few extra days in the Cilento are strongly recommended.

At the beginning or the end of the tour there is also the opportunity to visit Naples (a unique city and a good base for visiting Pompeii). The tour can easily be extended with a few days here. Also an extra night in Agropoli (a nice city and a good base for visiting Paestum) is strongly recommended. The tour can also be extended with a few days on the Amalfi Coast or a beautiful agriturismo in the heart of the Cilento, for some relax in the countryside. Details & prices on request.

UPGRADE

On our 'standard tours' we provide accommodation in very good, mostly 4-star hotels, with the best possible price/quality ratio. On some dates however it is possible to book a slightly cheaper version of this tour, staying in more luxurious 4- or 5-star hotels. Please ask us for details.

SHORTER & LONGER VERSIONS

Two shorter versions of this tour are also available, covering either the West Coast or only the South Coast. See also our other Kayaking tours !

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