



Independent walking tour (AMA3)

Backroads of the Amalfi Coast

*Amalfi, Scala & Ravello, 'Valle delle Ferriere' Nature Reserve,
Agerola & 'Sentiero degli Dei', Positano*



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GENIUS LOCI TRAVEL - The Real Spirit Of Italy



INTRODUCTION

The Amalfi Coast is probably Italy's most beautiful coastline and tourists have flocked there for centuries. More recently, its amazing network of footpaths has been discovered too. And it's just as well, because walking along the Amalfi Coast is something everyone should do at least once in their life! For the more seasoned walker, or for those who have already walked the Amalfi Coast, Genius Loci Travel has developed this special tour, which brings you not only to the famous coastal resorts, but also lets you discover a number of 'hidden treasures'. On this trip your overnight stays are equally divided between the two most famous resort towns, Amalfi & Positano, and beautiful, quiet locations 'off the beaten track'.

As the Sorrento Peninsula, the southern coastline of which is the Amalfi Coast, is basically a high mountain chain emerging from the Mediterranean, the landscape of the Costiera Amalfitana is immensely varied and surrounded by infinite ever-changing views. Along the coast itself it can be typically Mediterranean, with numerous species of wild perfumed herbs, myrtle shrubs, thyme, rosemary and mastic trees. And as it is protected from the cold northern winds by the impressive mountains, it has a wonderful climate & flowers all year round. Further inland it can be almost alpine with meadows and bare rocks. In between, man has created an incomparable mosaic terraced landscape. Amazing lemon groves and vineyards look out over the clear sea. And cultural heritage abounds, with beautiful little churches, ruins of castles and old farmhouses 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, as there are thousands of footpaths. Some of which have become 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 Republic of Amalfi. But there are unknown trails which are just as beautiful as well! Heading 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 special tour shows you the paths most guides don't know about and most books don't tell you about! This is the perfect tour for those who want to discover both the real charm of the Amalfi Coast and some of the famous spots as well.

Of course you'll have the time to visit the villages which are must-see attractions: Amalfi itself, but also Atrani, wonderfully preserved through the centuries, Ravello with its magnificent villas, and of course the scenic and fashionable Positano. You will mainly 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 has become Italy's most famous coastline with good reason. But also that it only takes a little effort to get 'off the beaten track' and you will 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, partly waymarked. Elsewhere you have to follow the route notes provided together with the maps. Average walking times: from approx.. 5 to 6 h. each day.



DAY-TO-DAY PROGRAMME

Day 1 – Arrival in Scala

Arrival in Naples (airport) or Salerno (train station). You are met by a taxi (optional) and brought to your hotel in Scala. If you feel like exploring the village centre you're free to pay a quick visit and then perhaps go for a swim in the panoramic pool to wash off the weariness of the journey.

Accommodation: Scala - Hotel ***

Day 2 – Hamlets of the Amalfi Coast

Today you make a short roundwalk towards Ravello, one of the highlights of the Amalfi Coast. First you walk down into the valley which separates Scala from Ravello, along an ancient muletrack. Then, along a very scenic path, you climb up to Ravello. The French novelist André Gide once described this village as being 'closer to the sky than the seashore'. For centuries its 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. Ravello also boasts two magnificent villas – the superb 11th-century Villa Rufolo was 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. From here you then descend to the small hamlet of Torello, through lemon groves and vineyards. From there a stunning path brings you down to the delightful coastal village of Atrani. Atrani is probably the best-preserved village on the Amalfi Coast, with narrow little streets and a serene village square. You can stop there for a drink before walking on to Amalfi. This walk, along a wonderful medieval mule track high above the coast, offers great views over both Atrani and Amalfi. From Amalfi you then take the local bus back to Scala.

Accommodation: Scala - Hotel ***

Total walking distance: 7 km. Approx. walking time: 4 h. Ascent & descent: + 200 m./- 560 m.

Day 3 – From Scala into the Valle delle Ferriere

Today you walk down to Amalfi along an incredibly scenic path, through the higher parts of one of Italy's most interesting nature reserves, the 'Valle delle Ferriere'. First you walk about level to small hamlet of Minuta, from where a steep climb starts. Along a comfortable, more or less level path you then enter the valley. You will enjoy some spectacular scenery, walking over clear footpaths underneath the towering cliffs, and passing some little waterfalls. If you're feeling particularly brave there's even the chance to have a swim. Then you descend through the forest to the little village of Pogerola, dominating the valley of Amalfi from the west. From here you take some beautiful medieval steps, which offer nice views over the valley, down to the centre of Amalfi. Through a number of wonderful alleys you then end up in the main square, Piazza Duomo, and you can settle in at your hotel in the town centre.

Accommodation: Amalfi - Hotel ***

Total walking distance: 11 km. Approx. walking time: 5 h. Ascent & descent: + 300 m./- 700 m.

Day 4 – The Torre dello Ziro & Valle dei Mulini

Today is a special day which will really give you a good idea of the amazing cultural and natural heritage of the Amalfi Coast. The first part of the walk takes us into the quiet little back alleys of Amalfi, where you can still notice the strong Moorish influence. An ancient flight of steps takes us up beneath the impressive limestone cliffs towards the little village of Pontone, part of the medieval defence system of the town of Amalfi. You walk to the spectacular Torre dello Ziro, located on a narrow ridge in a park-like landscape, which is a marvellous picnic spot with



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unforgettable views of Amalfi to the one side and Atrani to the other. Then you descend into the 'Valle dei Mulini', the valley of the mills, with its ruins of Europe's most ancient paper factories, dating back to the 11th century. The easy path 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, to admire a number of beautiful waterfalls. Then you return back down to Amalfi. Along the path there are many impressive ruins of the first paper mills of Europe, adding a mysterious touch to the landscape. Back down in Amalfi you can visit the paper museum, before returning to your hotel.

Accommodation: Amalfi - Hotel ***

Total walking distance: 9 km. Approx. walking time: 4,5 h. Ascent & descent: +/- 450 m.

Day 5 – From Amalfi to Agerola

To gain a bit of altitude today you can take the local bus to Pogerola (optional, strenuous walk). From Pogerola you then climb up to the small church of Madonna dei Fuondi, where you get impressive views over the whole coastline. Another short stretch uphill brings you onto one of the area's long-distance paths, that of the 'Valle delle Ferriere'. Walking along this comfortable footpath through chestnut forests and deep valleys, and partly along the edge of the high plain, with marvellous views over the whole coast and Capri, you reach the small village of San Lazzaro, on the plain of Agerola. A short detour can bring you to the impressive ruins of the Convent of Cospiti, founded by St. Francis. After San Lazzaro, a very scenic path beneath the towering cliffs takes you into the higher part of the 'Fjord' of Furore, one of southern Italy's most spectacular canyons. The path then gradually ascends through a terraced area towards the scattered houses of the village of Furore. You then walk up again and reach the rural outskirts of the village of Bomerano, where your comfortable agriturismo is located. Here you will spend the next two nights.

Accommodation: Bomerano - Agriturismo

Total walking distance: 12 km. Approx. walking time: 5 h. Ascent & descent: + 600 m./- 300 m.

Day 6 – To the highest peaks of the Amalfi Coast

Today's walk brings you into the mountains above Bomerano, towards the highest peaks of the Amalfi Coast. Views from here are perhaps even more beautiful than from the famous 'Sentiero degli Dei'. The first part of the walk is a relaxed stroll through the charming village of Bomerano, but then, through vineyards and chestnut forest, the path starts to climb up to Monte Tre Calli. After about an hour walking uphill you reach the ridge of Monte Tre Calli, where you find unrivalled 360° views! A fantastic scenic walk takes you along the ridge, through meadows and forest, to a natural rock formation known as 'the mushroom'. From here there is the option of continuing towards the highest mountain in the area, Monte Sant'Angelo. Otherwise you can opt for a relaxed picnic lunch. Then you start the descent towards the little chapel of the 'Virgin of the Silence', where you will enjoy magical views of Positano. You then walk back from there to your agriturismo along an easy road, with views that are grand to say the least.

Accommodation: Bomerano - Agriturismo

Total walking distance: 9 km. Approx. walking time: 4,5 h. Ascent & descent: +/- 430 m. (longer options available)

Day 7 – Along the 'Path of the Gods' to Positano

Directly from your agriturismo you walk onto the most famous footpath of the Amalfi Coast, the 'Sentiero degli Dei' (Footpath of the Gods), a walk with unrivalled views. After a first beautiful stretch through terraced vineyards and ancient buildings you reach Colle Serra, where the views open up towards the other end of the peninsula: from the monastery of San Domenico, dominating the coast from its stupendous hilltop position, all the way until the island of Capri. You then follow a very panoramic stretch, through spectacular scenery with bizarre rock formations and luxurious vegetation. Here the 'Footpath of the Gods' really lives up to its name! Then you reach the charming



hamlet of Nocelle and, passing yet another spectacular valley, you'll arrive in the little village of Montepertuso. After Montepertuso it's only a short walk down to Positano itself, one of the most charming villages on the coast.

Accommodation: Positano - Hotel***

Total walking distance: 10 km. Approx. walking time: 4,5 h. Ascent & descent: + 150 m./- 650 m.

Day 8 – Positano seen from above

Today you take a local bus up to Montepertuso, where you start a great day's walk, all around the valley of Positano. Following ancient footpaths through the forest and past marvellous viewpoints you climb up towards Santa Maria al Castello, the 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. Through a nice park you then walk along an easy trail to the Caserma Forestale (the forestry service hut). Those who want to can climb up from here to Monte Sant'Angelo, the highest mountain of the peninsula, a very demanding but rewarding ascent. The standard walk continues through the forest and, with a number of zigzags, descends down to Montepertuso. Along another medieval mule track you descend back down to Positano.

Accommodation: Positano - Hotel***

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

Day 9 – Departure

End of the tour. Return to Naples/Salerno by taxi, boat or bus or extension of the tour.

TOUR DETAILS

ACCOMMODATION & MEALS

All nights are spent in beautiful, characteristic family-run hotels (generally 3-star; 4/5-star on request). All rooms have en-suite facilities.

Most of the accommodation are on a **B&B** basis. Only on your first two nights in Scala (and, on request, the first night in Agerola) are you on a half-board basis. When dinners are not included you will be free to choose from the large number of restaurants in the area for your evening meal. Your accommodation holder can give you good tips. Alternatively, you can eat at the premises of the hotel (on some occasions).

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.

INCLUDED

- 2 nights Hotel in Scala *** - HB
- 2 nights Hotel in Amalfi *** - BB
- 2 nights Agriturismo in Agerola - BB
- 2 nights Hotel in Positano *** - 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

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

ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

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

Departure: The tour ends in POSITANO. A frequent bus service can bring you to either Sorrento or Amalfi/Salerno, from where you travel on to your next destination (Naples or Rome can both be easily reached). Several taxi services are available to bring you directly to your next destination.

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

Moderately easy (2-3): Mostly easy walks, though some include walking uphill, sometimes on paths with rough surfaces. On some days extensions or shortcuts are possible.

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

FOOTPATHS & WAYMARKING

Footpaths: 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*).

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.

N.B In case you don't feel confident a local guide can be provided for some of the trails.



TOUR VARIATIONS

EXTRA NIGHTS & EXTENSIONS

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

At the beginning or the end of the tour there is the 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 Sorrento, Naples or with a few days on the island of **Capri**. Several good accommodations are available. Details and prices on request.

To make just a brief visit to Capri you can also book an extra night in Positano, as there is a direct boat from Positano to Capri.



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