



Guided cycling tour (BGAM)

The Amalfi Coast: a Divine Mix of Nature & Culture

Cycling along the world's most beautiful coast, from Salerno to Amalfi & Ravello, from Positano to Sorrento



TRIP NOTES

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INTRODUCTION

The Sorrento peninsula, neatly situated between the Gulfs of Naples and Salerno, is a region of staggering natural beauty and cultural treasures. Best known for its medieval coastal towns and inland hamlets such as Amalfi, Positano, Ravello and Sorrento, it is also home to several hidden marvels. Small natural reserves, ancient paper mills and wild mountain scenery are only a small distance away from the busy, touristy centres of its main towns, waiting to be explored by the traveller in the know. The best of the coastal scenery is on the southern side of the peninsula, the Amalfi Coast. With its towering cliffs and picturesque coves this is definitely one of the most beautiful coastlines in Europe, with a long tradition as one of the premier tourist destinations in Italy.

This tour gives you the opportunity to discover both the busy, touristy and the quiet, hidden, but no less spectacular, parts of the Amalfi Coast & Sorrento Peninsula. You will start from the little fishing village of Cetara at the south-eastern end of the coast and cycle from there towards the very tip of the peninsula. From here you'll enjoy a marvellous view of the isle of Capri, before cycling down to the seaside resort of Sorrento. On your way you will follow the spectacular coastal road from Cetara to Amalfi by way of distinguished Maiori, delightful Minori and tiny whitewashed Atrani. You will marvel at the location of Ravello, high up on a rocky cliff, while visiting its world-famous villas and gardens. On your way to Sorrento you will visit the amazing deeply-eroded 'fjord' of Furore, explore mundane Positano and cycle through the little hamlets of Praiano and Conca dei Marini. From Sant'Agata sui Due Golfi quiet little winding roads will take you first to Termini, and then through Massa Lubrese to Sorrento, before turning back to Salerno.

During your trip you will stay in beautiful hotels, located in some of the world's most suggestive little towns. After your day's cycling along the amazingly scenic coastal road you will visit the Duomo and its Paradise Cloister at Amalfi, and take a walk in the Valley of the Paper Mills, discovering the city's industrial heritage. Or you can stop for a cup of tea in the little teahouse in the gardens of the majestic Villa Cimbrone at Ravello, and stroll through the back alleys of Positano. On your way round the tip of the Sorrento peninsula you will enjoy great views of the Amalfi Coast, the Coast of Sorrento and the plain dominated by Mount Vesuvius. Here you will take your time for a hearty lunch in a small 'trattoria' and taste the area's renowned 'limoncello' lemon liquor.

On this amazing cycling adventure you will discover several hidden aspects of the Amalfi Coast and see for yourself that it has become Italy's most famous coastline with good reason. It will become clear that it only takes a little effort to get 'off the beaten track', finding yourself surrounded by nature at just a few hundred metres from the crowds. In short, you'll explore this delightful corner of Italy in a totally different way.



Please note: this is a moderate tour which is suitable for all those who are in a good general physical condition. On some of the stretches you may encounter some longer climbs. Rides are not very long, leaving plenty of time for sightseeing. Average cycling times: approx. 3-5 hours each day.



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DAY-TO-DAY PROGRAMME

Day 0 – Naples (or Salerno)

N.B. If you arrive one day earlier you have the chance to pay a visit to the world-famous archaeological museum in Naples, where all the artefacts from Pompeii and Herculaneum are displayed, and/or the equally wonderful Capodimonte museum. It is also possible to make a daytrip to Pompeii. Several hotels can be booked in Naples, Salerno and Pompeii, according to your wishes (either 'downtown' centrally located, or near the harbour or train station, ranging from 3- to 5-star).

Day 1 – Arrival in Cetara

After your arrival at Cetara you can settle in at your hotel. In case you are early you can go for a stroll through the historic centre of the small village of Cetara, situated at walking distance, or walk the steps down to the beautiful beach for a first refreshing swim. Towards the end of the afternoon you will meet your tour guide and the rest of the group and get hold of your bikes. Tonight we eat all together in the beautifully located and very nice restaurant at the hotel, overlooking the Mediterranean.

Accommodation: Hotel in Cetara

Day 2 – Cetara to Amalfi : passing through Minori and Atrani, with optional visit of Ravello

On the first day of your trip we will start out from Cetara and head for splendid medieval Amalfi, following the beautiful winding coastal road, considered by some to be 'the most scenic ride in the world'. The ride is short so you can perhaps sleep in for a bit and enjoy the scenery. After a leisurely breakfast you can perhaps walk down to the beach and enjoy another swim in the crystal clear waters. Halfway the morning we'll regroup and then hop on our bikes, heading for the idyllic village of Cetara, named after the Roman 'cetus' (large fish), the origin of our word cetaceans. Still today it is a real fishing village, which produces some of the world's finest tuna fish and anchovies delicacies, and dolphins can often be spotted near the coast.

Then we continue uphill to Capo d'Orso, the highest point of the road, and a wonderful outlook over the whole of the Amalfi Coast, the Cilento and Capri. After admiring the view you start descending, along a beautiful winding road through lemon groves, forests and dramatic cliffs, until you arrive at Maiori, the largest town on the coast. A short stretch around the headland brings us to Minori, with its nice little centre and beautiful seaside boulevard.. Then we continue with a short climb towards Castiglione, once part of the defence system of the Amalfi Republic. Here you have the choice of cycling up to marvellous Ravello by bicycle, which is quite a climb, or continuing to Amalfi where you can leave your bikes at the hotel and then take a bus to Ravello (optional). After passing Castiglione we will cycle through marvellous little Atrani with its whitewashed houses and arrive in Amalfi itself, our base for the night. In the evening we are picked up by private boat and brought to a nice restaurant located in a beautiful little bay nearby. After dinner we travel back to the hotel, gliding by boat over the glorious Mediterranean.

Accommodation: Hotel in Amalfi

Distance: 20/30 km. – Cycling time: 2,5 – 3,5 h.

Day 3 – From Amalfi through Praiano and Positano to Sant'Agata sui Due Golfi

Today we'll explore the second half of the dramatic 'Strada Amalfitana', from Amalfi to the town of Sant'Agata sui Due Golfi, located on the very edge of the peninsula and offering wide views of both the Amalfi and Sorrento coasts. We start with the short ride from Amalfi to Positano, easily the most scenic – and mundane – of the towns on the coast. Shortly after Amalfi we'll pass by the scenic 'Grotta Azzurra' sea cave, which is open to the public, and the spectacular 'fjord' of Furore, a deep canyon opening up to the sea, in which a small fishing



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village clings to the rocky cliffs. Once we reach Praiano we'll start enjoying some great views of Positano, with Capri and the islands of the Sirens in the background. Photo opportunities abound! The ride through the colourful streets of Positano – although busy – is something special. After Positano the coast becomes more wild and rugged, and it is a nice climb to get to the Colli di San Pietro, beautifully situated on the ridge that separates the Amalfi Coast from the rest of the Sorrento Peninsula. We can now admire the wonderful panorama over the coast towards Capri, and the view of the plain stretching out towards Naples, dominated by Mount Vesuvius. From here we then cycle towards the very end of the peninsula, Punta Campanella. A short flat stretch then brings us to our hotel at Sant'Agata sui Due Golfi. After settling in at the hotel you can relax and enjoy a hearty meal in the hotel's restaurant.

Accommodation: Hotel in Sant' Agata sui Due Golfi

Distance: 32 km. – Cycling time: 3 h.



Day 4 – From Sant'Agata through Sorrento to Positano - with a view of Capri and Mount Vesuvius

On the first stretch of the road after leaving our hotel this morning, we can admire not only the wonderful panorama over the coast towards Capri, but also enjoy the view of the plain stretching out towards Naples, dominated by Mount Vesuvius. We now cycle on the plateau high above the coast towards the very end of the peninsula, Punta Campanella. From the very last village (appropriately named "Termini") we have a great view of Capri. There is then the possibility to descend towards the delightful beach of Marina del Cantone and up again. We then return along the northern coast, with wonderful views of the Bay of Naples and Mount Vesuvius again, through the charming village of Massa Lubrense.

We can of course cycle through Sorrento, tourist capital of the area, perched on high vertical limestone cliffs above the sea, and visit its city walls and the old town centre, with its wonderful gardens and villas. Alternatively, we can turn inland again shortly before reaching Sorrento and climb slowly up to Sant'Agata sui Due Golfi again. From Sant'Agata it is then only a short flat ride to the Colle di San Pietro, and then all the way down to Positano again. Whizzing down this part of the road just before sunset, looking out over splendid Positano, is a wonderful experience, definitely one of the nicest stretches to do on a bike worldwide! Once you arrive at Positano you can relax and settle in at your hotel, before heading into town. Or down towards its beach. You can explore its scenic and colourful alleyways on foot – necessary as most of the small back streets you want to have a look at consist of flights of steps! You are free to make your own dinner arrangements tonight, with the choice of several different pizzerias and restaurants catering for the most diverse budgets.

Accommodation: Hotel in Positano

Distance: 37 / 48 km. – Cycling time : 3,5- 4,5 h.



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Day 5 – From Positano to Salerno : a last long look at the wonderful Amalfi Coast

During your final day you head back in the opposite direction, from Positano to Salerno. You have the opportunity to sample the nature, culture and atmosphere of the coast's most famous settings once more, and take in the wonders of its many little towns and villages. You will take your time for a last look at the 'Duomo' of Amalfi, stop for a coffee in Atrani's marvellous town square, have a pastry at one of Minori's bakeries, or stop for a cold drink on a terrace overlooking Maiori's ample seafront boulevard. You will drink up the amazing scenery while cycling towards Cetara and stop for a closer look at Vietri's colourful tableware ceramics.

After arriving in Salerno you can leave your bikes and explore some of the city by climbing up to the medieval castle overlooking it, or visiting its surprising botanical garden. Or you could simply wander through the maze of little alleyways in the historical centre, dotted with many little craft shops, or have an ice cream on the city's 'lungomare' boulevard. Alternatively, you can stroll through the city's main shopping streets trying not to spend too much money. It is your own choice for dinner again this evening, meaning you can go out and find a suitable restaurant to end your wonderful trip through one of Italy's most delightful coastal areas.

Accommodation: Hotel in Salerno

Distance: 40 km. – Cycling time: 3,5 h.

Day 6 – Departure from Salerno

The tour ends in Salerno after breakfast today. A train transfer can take you back to Naples. A taxi transfer to other destinations can be arranged on request.



TOUR DETAILS

ACCOMMODATION & MEALS

All nights are spent in beautiful, characteristic hotels (generally 3-star). All rooms have en-suite facilities.

Dinners are included on all nights, except for the last two when you are free to organise your own dinner in one of the many restaurants in Positano and Salerno.

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.

Night 1: The first night is spent in a beautifully located hotel near Cetara. The hotel has a marvellous view of the Bay of Salerno and is within walking distance of the fishing village of Cetara.

Night 2: Tonight you stay in Amalfi, the ancient capital of the Amalfi Coast. Our nicely decorated hotel is located in a great position, right in the historical heart of the town, just a few metres from the shore.

Night 3: The third night you stay in a nice hotel located in Sant'Agata sui Due Golfi, with views of both the Gulf of Naples and the Gulf of Salerno.

Night 4: Tonight you stay in yet another beautifully located hotel at Positano, situated near the centre of the mundane heart of the Amalfi Coast. From the hotel the whole of the town is only a short walk away.

Night 5: The final night you will stay in a cosy 3-star hotel in Salerno. The hotel is within walking distance of all the major points of interest of the town.

UPGRADE/CHANGES IN ACCOMMODATION

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

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

Easy to Moderate (2-3): Mostly moderate rides but with some longer climbs. All roads are well paved and mainly quiet with limited traffic except for some periods during summer and holidays. Extensions are possible on some days.

Fitness: Some experience of bicycle touring and a good general physical condition will certainly make your travel experience more enjoyable. You should be able to cycle for several hours a day even in hot dry weather conditions.



INCLUDED

- Private English-speaking tour leader for the duration of the tour
- Professional guiding service for each activity
- Accommodation: 5 nights in good ***/**** hotels: 1 night Cetara, 1 night Amalfi, 1 night Sant'Agata sui Due Golfi, 1 night Positano, 1 night Salerno
- Support van & mechanical assistance for the duration of the tour
- All private & public transfers as indicated throughout the entire itinerary
- Special activities as outlined in the day-by-day itinerary
- 24/7 assistance
- Luggage transport

NOT INCLUDED

- Departure taxes
- Visas
- Travel Insurance
- Drinks and meals not mentioned in the itinerary
- Optional additional tours or activities
- Tips
- Items of personal nature
- Bicycle rental (road racing bicycles available on request)

ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

Arrival: The tour starts in CETARA, which can easily be reached by bus from Salerno, just an hour from Naples by train. Naples has an international airport. From Rome (and many other cities) Salerno can easily be reached.

Departure: The tour ends in SALERNO. A short transfer can bring you to the local train station, from where you can easily get to Naples.

TOUR VARIATIONS

EXTRA NIGHTS

It is possible to extend your tour with a few days in Salerno, along the beautiful Costiera Amalfitana or in Naples. Details and prices on request. Extra cycling and/or sightseeing options can be provided!

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