



*Independent cycling tour (BRAM)*

# The Amalfi Coast Bike Challenge

Cycling along the world's most beautiful coast, all around the Peninsula, over the famous passes, from Salerno to Sorrento



*5-day road cycling tour with different bases in charming hotels*



## TRIP NOTES

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## INTRODUCTION

*The Sorrento Peninsula, situated between the beautiful Bay of Naples and the equally beautiful Gulf of Salerno, is an area of staggering natural beauty and scattered with cultural treasures. Best known for its medieval coastal towns and inland villages such as Amalfi, Positano and Ravello and the resort town 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, waiting to be explored by the aware traveller. 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 definitely is one of the most beautiful coastlines in Europe, with a long tradition as one of the premier tourist destinations in Italy. In addition it offers some of the most beautiful roads and some challenging climbs which have been featured several times in the Giro d'Italia. Cycling along the 'Costiera Amalfitana' is an unforgettable experience !*

*This tour gives you the opportunity to discover both the Amalfi and Sorrento Coast. You will start from the little fishermen's village of Vietri and cycle north towards splendid medieval Amalfi. Along your way you pass through Maiori and delightful Minori and Atrani, arriving at the coast's most famous town of Amalfi. Shortly after you pass along the deeply eroded and amazing 'fjord' of Furore and cycle through the little hamlets of Praiano and Conca dei Marini, before arriving at mundane Positano, clinging to the coast's rocky cliffs. From Positano you climb up to Sant'Agata sui Due Golfi, located on the very ridge of the peninsula and offering wide views both on the Amalfitan and Sorrentine coasts. Small winding country roads then bring you to Termini on the very tip of the peninsula, and down again to Massa Lubrense and the seaside town of Sorrento.*

*From here you continue through the foot hills above Sorrento to the seaside resort of Vico Equense and on to Castellammare di Stabia. Along your way you can enjoy ample views of the Gulf of Naples and Mount Vesuvius on the one hand, and of the mountain tops of Mount Faito on the other. After arriving at Castellammare, you turn inland again, climbing up along Gragnano and Pimonte to Agerola, one of the great climbs of the area. From the high valley of Agerola you then descend on a steep winding road to Pogerola and Amalfi, passing through Furore and cycling around the high end of the spectacular 'fjord'. Returning to Salerno you will make an inland detour to famous Ravello and Tramonti, well known for its local food specialties and wine. Also will you cycle past wonderful Raito and the millennium old abbey of Cava dei Tirreni. A last climb takes you up to the medieval castle of Salerno, for a last magnificent view of the Gulf of Salerno, and the whole Amalfi Coast.*

*This amazing cycling adventure will take you along some of Italy's most spectacular roads, many of which have been the theatre of epic cycling battles during the 'Giro d'Italia' between athletes the like of Fausto Coppi and Gino Bartali and more recently Lance Armstrong and Ivan Basso. You will discover several hidden aspects of the Sorrento peninsula and see with your own eyes that it has become with reason Italy's most famous coastline.*



*Please note: this is a moderate tour for which experience with road cycling and a good general physical condition are necessary to make your travel experience enjoyable. Average cycling times: approx 5-7 hours each day.*



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## DAY-TO-DAY PROGRAMME

### Day 1 – Arrival in Vietri/Cetara

After your arrival at Vietri/Cetara you get settled in at the hotel and take hold of your bicycles. In case you arrive early you may want to take your bicycles for a short ride to the fishermen's village of Cetara and go for a stroll through his historical centre. The idyllic village of Cetara is famous for its tuna fish production. Take your time for a drink at the little bar near the tiny port of the village, overlooking the colourful fishermen's boats lying on the sandy beach.

**Accommodation: Hotel\*\*\* /\*\*\*\* - Vietri**

*Distance: 10-15 km. Altitude gain: 150 m. Cycling time: 1 h. (optional ride)*

### Day 2 – Vietri to Sorrento

On the first day of your trip you will head for splendid Amalfi, following the beautiful winding coastal road, defined by some 'the most scenic ride in the world'. You cycle past Cetara and then it goes on to Capo d'Orso, the highest point, offering a wonderful outlook on the whole of the Amalfi Coast and Capri. An exhilarating descent on a beautiful winding road through lemon groves, forests and dramatic cliffs, brings you to Maiori, the biggest town on this stretch of the coast, and to Minori, a delightful little village with its nice centre and beautiful seaside boulevard. Then you continue with a short climb to Castiglione and the little whitewashed village of Atrani and the splendid town of Amalfi. You can halt here for a quick visit of the town and why not, a mid-morning 'gelato' near the beach. From Amalfi you continue along the dramatic 'Strada Amalfitana' and shortly you will pass the spectacular 'fjord' of Furore, a deep canyon opening up to the sea in which a small fishermen's village clings to the rocky cliffs. You then pass through Praiano and Positano, easily the most scenic – and mundane - of the towns on the Amalfi Coast. After Positano the coast becomes wilder and more rugged, and it is a good climb to arrive at the Colli di San Pietro, beautifully situated on the ridge that separates the Amalfi Coast from the rest of the Sorrento Peninsula. You now cycle on the plateau high above the coast towards the very end of the peninsula, Punta Campanella. From the very last village (indeed: called 'Termini') you have a great view on Capri. You then start riding along the northern coast, with wonderful views of the Bay of Naples and Mount Vesuvius, through the charming village of Massa Lubrense to the seaside resort of Sorrento, perched on high vertical limestone cliffs above the sea.. Here you will settle in at your hotel before going out to visit the city's walls and the old town centre with its wonderful gardens and villas. Dinner is on your own tonight, you have the choice of several different pizzeria and restaurants catering for the most divers budgets.

**Accommodation: Hotel\*\*\* - Sorrento**

*Distance: 70 km. Altitude gain: 950 m. Cycling time: 4 h.*

### Day 3 – Sorrento to Amalfi

Today you will tackle several mountains: first you cycle from Sorrento through the mountains in the direction of Castellammare di Stabia, after which you climb up to the mountain ridge and pass Agerola high in the mountains on the plateau between the Sorrento and Amalfi side of the peninsula, before descending to Amalfi. From Sorrento you will follow quiet back roads to Piano di Sorrento, after which you start climbing up the foot hills of Mount Faito. Once you arrive in the small village of Arola, your road starts snaking through hilly countryside, taking you up and down, through several small hamlets, before descending to the seaside resort of Vico Equense. Here you can make a short stop for a drink on a terrace overlooking the Gulf of Naples, with the backdrop of Mount Vesuvius. From Vico Equense you continue along the coastal road to the town of Castellammare di Stabia, once the location of several luxurious Roman villas hidden. From Castellammare you then start climbing up through the villages of Gragnano and Pimonte, to the highplain of Agerola. Here you will pass through the village of Bomerano (a good spot for lunch), and then continue to the monument to Fausto Coppi at the



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'belvedere'. After admiring the view you start the exhilarating descent to the Amalfi Coast, full of hairpin curves, made famous by the epic battles in Italy's 'Giro d'Italia' between Coppi and Bartali! You will pass through the village of Furore, and past the monastery of Santa Rosa in beautiful Conca dei Marini. A short detour brings you to Pogerola, a little village on a high cliff face overlooking Amalfi. After a short break here you return to the main road and descend the last couple of km to the medieval centre of Amalfi. After freshening up in your hotel, you will have plenty of time to visit the tiny town's Duomo with the Paradise Cloister, and stroll through its little back alleys. Those who want can have a look at the local Paper Museum, offering an interesting look at the centuries old local paper production. You also shouldn't forget to taste the locally produced 'limoncello' lemon liquor! In the evening you are picked up by private boat and brought to a nice restaurant located in a beautiful little bay nearby. After dinner you travel back to your hotel, gliding by boat over the glorious Mediterranean.

**Accommodation: Hotel\*\*\* - Amalfi**

*Distance: 65/70 km. Altitude gain: 1500 m. Cycling time: 4-5 h.*

**Day 4 – Amalfi to Salerno and back to Vietri/Cetara**

On the last cycling day you will head from Amalfi to Ravello and Tramonti, up in the mountains, and then back to Salerno. After leaving from Amalfi, you turn inland at Castiglione and start climbing up the steep winding road along the narrow valley of the 'Dragone' torrent and underneath the rock cliffs of Ravello. Ravello, one of the main highlights of the Amalfi Coast, boasts many medieval monuments, but is above all famous for its great villas with stupendous gardens, and stunning views over the Amalfi Coast. Then you continue inland through some surprising wild scenery in the direction of Tramonti, where you can find a place for lunch. From Tramonti you then descend along a winding road towards the Amalfi Coast again. You arrive at Maiori with its wide seaside boulevard. After a short stop for coffee, you start heading for Salerno, first climbing up to Capo d'Orso and then down again to Cetara. Shortly before arriving at Vietri sul Mare, you have the option to turn inland and climb up to explore the delightful villages of Raito, Benincasa and Dragonea, clinging to the hills. Then it goes on to the millennium old abbey of Cava dei Tirreni, one of the most impressive of southern Italy. After paying a short visit to the abbey, you descend into the town and visit its particular historical centre. Here you have the time for a refreshing drink in one of the many bars lining its main square. From Cava dei Tirreni you then climb up again – for the last time during this tour – to the hamlet of Croce and the impressive medieval castle towering high above Salerno. Here you are rewarded with a marvellous view of the Gulf of Salerno. Then you cycle down into the centre of Salerno, where you can stop to explore some of the city, before returning to Vietri/Cetara for the last night overlooking the Mediterranean. You can wander through the maze of little alley ways of the historical centre, dotted with many little artisanal shops, visit the stunning Duomo or have an ice cream on the town's 'lungomare' boulevard. Alternatively you can climb up to the surprising botanical garden "Giardini della Minerva" overlooking the whole city. Stroll through the city's main shopping streets to look for some real 'Made in Italy'. In the evening you are free to go out and find a suitable restaurant in Vietri/Cetara to end your wonderful trip through one of Italy's most delightful coastal areas.

**Accommodation: Hotel\*\*\* /\*\*\*\* - Vietri/Cetara (in alternative: Salerno)**

*Distance: about 70 km. Altitude gain: 1600 m. Cycling time: 4 h.*

**Day 5 – Departure**

The tour ends in Vietri/Cetara after breakfast today. A taxi transfer to other destinations can be arranged on request.



## TOUR DETAILS

### ACCOMMODATION & MEALS

All nights are spent in beautiful hotels (generally \*\*\*/\*\*\*\*-star). All rooms have en-suite facilities.

Dinners are not included on the second and last night of the tour.

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 will be passing through.

### INCLUDED

- 4 nights accommodation in good \*\*\*/\*\*\*\* hotels – BB/HB
- Accommodation: 2 nights Vietri/Cetara, 1 night Sorrento, 1 night Amalfi;
- Meals: 4 breakfasts, 2 dinners (restaurants)
- Extensive route notes, with description of the route & tourist information
- Maps at 1 : 50.000 scale (or better)
- GPS-tracks
- 24/7 h local assistance
- Luggage transport
- Private transfers as specified

### 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 (high quality road racing bikes. You may want to bring your own saddle and pedals)

### LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

**Moderate (3):** Moderate rides (to road biking standards!) with inevitably several climbs, some short stretches of which can be quite strenuous. All roads are well paved and mostly quiet with little traffic except for some stretches between Sorrento and Castellammare di Stabia. Extensions or shortcuts are possible on some days.

**Fitness:** Experience with road bicycling and a good general physical condition are necessary to make your travel experience enjoyable. You should be able to cycle for several hours a day and long distances also in hot dry weather conditions.



## ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

**Arrival:** The tour starts in VIETRI/CETARA which can easily be reached by bus from Salerno, which is only a one hour train ride away from Naples. Naples has an international airport. From Rome (and many other cities) Naples and Salerno can easily be reached.

**Departure:** The tour ends on day 5 in VIETRI/CETARA. A short transfer can bring you to Salerno train station from where Naples can easily be reached.

## TOUR VARIATIONS

### PERSONALISED ROUTES

This tour is only an example of a possible 'Amalfi Coast Bike Challenge'. This tour can be adapted to your wishes and special interests. You can book extra nights in beautiful places, such as Positano, or at the end of the tour to spend a few days at the beach. This tour can be used as a framework to create a personalised tour, longer or shorter, or with fewer different accommodations. Details and prices on request.

### GROUP TOURS

This tour is offered as a self-guided tour. It is however possible to organise this – or a similar, personalised tour, as a group tour, including a guide and a support vehicle. Also partly supported (only for the most challenging stretches) tours are available on request. Please contact us.

For small groups discounts are available.

### EXTRA NIGHTS

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

### UPGRADE

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



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