

Guided walking tour (GAMA)

Amalfi Coast Walking

*Naples, Vesuvius & Pompeii, Amalfi & Atrani, Ravello,
'Sentiero degli Dei', Praiano, Positano & Capri*



TRIP NOTES

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INTRODUCTION

The Amalfi Coast is definitely one of the most beautiful coastlines in Europe, an intriguing mix between an overwhelming natural environment and the patient labour of men, who have transformed the steep mountain slopes into a cascade of terraced lemon groves, with charming villages, chapels and other sites of cultural interest scattered all around.

Its dramatic coastline offers wonderful views, differing with every step you take, and the smell of rosemary and citrus trees fills the air, fields of multicoloured roses overwhelm the eyes and sandy beaches are magical to the touch. It offers an extraordinary palette of colours, with deep azure skies, white limestone cliffs, deep blue seas, and bright citrus orchards lit by the dazzling Mediterranean sun. This intoxicating sensual feast inspires a celebration of the goodness of life itself.

A web of ancient pathways winds along coastal cliffs, leading from charming seaside towns, through rustic woodlands and up to beautiful villages perched atop craggy peaks. Highlights include your bike along the stunning 'Sentiero degli Dei' ('Path of the Gods'), one of the world's finest day walks, the wonderful walk into the intriguing Valley of the Mills—the site of Europe's first paper mills, almost 1000 years old—the spectacular villages of Positano, Atrani and Ravello, and a visit and beautiful roundwalk over the island of Capri. And of course beautiful Amalfi itself: as has been said, for an Amalfitano the day he goes to heaven will be a day like any other...

But it is not just the scenery of the Amalfi Coast, the rest of the Bay of Naples region is fascinating as well. Not without reason did the Romans label it their 'Campania Felix'. The blue waters of the Mediterranean are dominated here by the world's most famous volcano, Mount Vesuvius (Italian: Vesuvio), the only volcano on the European mainland to have erupted within the last hundred years, but best known for its eruption in AD 79 that led to the destruction of the Roman cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum, a must for history buffs – and fascinating for everybody else regardless.

You visit the intriguing city of Naples, definitely one of the world's most interesting cities and more than worth a visit, despite all the prejudice. A city with thousands of years of history, officially founded by the Greeks, which also boasts the world's finest museum on Roman history and some amazing Baroque architecture. And of course the area is also known for its great food, including the world's best pizza. You visit Pompeii of course, the world-famous ruins, which give a real-life impression of how a Roman city looked, especially the way we plan the visit, away from the crowds. You also go for a great roundwalk on Mount Vesuvius, the volcano which caused the destruction of Pompeii, one of the highlights of the trip!

On this enchanting walking adventure you will discover that it is with good reason that the Amalfi Coast has become Italy's most famous coastline, but also that it only takes a little effort to get 'off the beaten track'. At just a few hundred metres from the crowds, you will find yourself surrounded by nature. On this tour we also take you beyond the crowds in Naples to experience the hidden treasures and authentic culture of this intriguing city. You will discover the hidden tracks of Mount Vesuvius, offering amazing views over the whole Bay of Naples. In short, you'll discover the real Italian paradise.



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, parts of them waymarked. Average walking time: approx. 5 hours each day.



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DAY-TO-DAY PROGRAMME

Day 0 Naples

If you arrive one day earlier you have the possibility to pay a visit to the world-famous archaeological museum, where all the artefacts from Pompeii and Herculaneum are displayed, and/or the equally wonderful Capodimonte museum.

Day 1 – Arrival in Naples

Today you arrive in the bustling city of Naples. After settling in at your centrally located hotel, in the heart of the historical centre of Naples you can go for a short stroll through the colourful streets already, soaking up its atmosphere, or visit a museum. Towards the end of the afternoon you meet your tour leader and the rest of the group. After a brief introduction to the tour, we will go for a rewarding roundwalk through the heart of Naples, covering the most interesting 'highlights', such as the Royal Palace, the royal theatre, the beautiful 'Galleria' and the medieval castles of course. Then we also pass through unknown, lively (but safe!) neighbourhoods, with their unbelievable history, where we can find Greek, Roman and medieval buildings all in the space of a few square metres. The walk also brings us through quiet parks and along the shore, to relax from the hectic street life in the city with a rewarding view of the Bay of Naples. In the evening we dine in a very nice restaurant close to your hotel.

Accommodation: Naples - Meals included: 1 dinner

Total walking distance: 5 km. Approx. walking time: 2-3 h.

Day 2 – Around Mt. Vesuvius & Pompeii to the Amalfi Coast

This morning we travel south and drive up to Mount Vesuvius, the volcano that with the fatal eruption of 79 AD completely destroyed the bustling city of Pompeii. We make an amazing roundwalk here, completely different from the standard visit to Vesuvius (and normally closed to the public), which makes us feel like we are in a completely different world! The walk takes us past the impressive volcanic phenomena to be seen around the crater: lava flows, pumice fields and grottos and the amazing 'Valley of the Giant', culminating in a walk to the top. The literal 'high' light is a spectacular detour, led by a specialist volcano guide, which will take us right around the crater rim and up to the highest point at 1281 metres (4000 feet), where we have the very best view of the Bay of Naples, one of the panoramic wonders of the world. We then descend and can have a relaxed lunch on the slopes of Mt. Vesuvius, before travelling down to Pompeii, considered to be the world's most fascinating ruins. A visit to Pompeii gives us an amazing insight into the life of a Roman city, especially when walking along its chariot-marked back streets. We will be captivated by the exceptional frescoes to be found throughout the city or by the opulence of the villas, with their atriums and charming peristyles, owned by the rich and influential of the day. Visit the amphitheatre, as well as the Villa of Mysteries with its masterpiece frescoes depicting the secret Dionysus rites, the Roman Forum and basilica, temples, public baths, and the tiny Odeon created for music recitals. What many don't realise is that the modern-day town of Pompeii is definitely worth the detour as well, if only for its amazing sanctuary. We will go for a stroll here and then have an 'aperitivo' to look back on a great day. Then we drive on by private coach to the Amalfi Coast. The bus drops us off in a great place in Agerola, high above the Amalfi Coast.

Accommodation: Agerola (Bomerano) - Meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 dinner

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

Day 3 – Monte Sant'Angelo Walk – to the highest peaks of the Amalfi Coast

Today's walk is one of the most amazing roundwalks Agerola has to offer. Along relatively easy paths & tracks we ascend towards the highest peaks of the Amalfi Coast, where views are perhaps even more beautiful than from the famed '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. After about an hour walking uphill we reach the ridge of the Monte Tre Calli, where there are 360° views, ranging from the Agerola Plain to Capri. We then walk along the ridge to a natural rock formation, known as 'the mushroom', where we have to face a choice: some



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might continue the climb to Monte Sant'Angelo, otherwise we opt for a relaxed 'picnic with a view'. Then we start the descent towards the little chapel of the 'Virgin of the Silence', where views of Positano are grand to say the least. We then walk back along an easy road to our accommodation.

Accommodation: Agerola (Bomerano) - Meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 picnic lunch, 1 dinner

Total walking distance: 8- 12 km. Approx. walking time: 4-5 h.

Day 4 – Along the 'Sentiero degli Dei' down to Positano. Boat trip along the coast to Amalfi

In the morning we will do 'one of the world's greatest hikes', according to many guides. We start the walk straight from our accommodation. Along a panoramic road, high above the coast, we walk to the village square of Bomerano, where we can take a coffee and buy some sandwiches. Then we start walking along one of the most famous footpaths of the area, the 'Path of the Gods'. This path really lives up to its name, suspended between the sky and the Mediterranean. It winds through unique scenery, with unrivalled views over the coast and sea. For a few hours we will be walking through some of the most spectacular scenery of the whole Amalfi Coast, until we reach the charming little hamlet of Nocelle. Here we can have a nice lunch in a good restaurant, with amazing views over Positano and the Amalfi Coast (alternatively we can have a great 'picnic with a view' along the route). Passing another spectacular valley we then arrive at the little village of Montepertuso. After that it's only a short walk down to Positano, one of the most charming locations on the Amalfi Coast, an almost vertical town of colourful buildings reached by a network of ancient paths and tracks. We stroll through its small, almost oriental alleys and perhaps have a swim, or a drink on one of its many pleasant terraces. There's time for some private exploration before we return in the late afternoon to Amalfi by boat. Another great way to absorb this amazing scenery! A nice meal in a relaxed atmosphere is the perfect end for this great day on the Amalfi Coast.

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

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

Day 5 – The historical heart of the Amalfi Coast: Amalfi, Atrani & Ravello

In the morning we will first pay a short visit to the beautiful medieval town with its wonderful 'Duomo' and the Paradise Cloister. Amalfi was once an important naval power, like Venice, and its past glory still shows. Every street hides a charming square, and it's a real pleasure to wander through the labyrinth of white washed alleys. We go through the Piazza dei Dogi and past the Antichi Arsenali. Another street takes us to the Vagliendola quarter, with its tower houses and the famous Hotel dei Cappuccini - once a monastery called San Pietro della Canonica, founded in the 13th century. Then we walk to the beautiful little town of Atrani, along a very scenic path, with great viewpoints over the town centre. From Atrani you proceed through the narrow little white streets and then up the 'Valley of the Dragon', until we reach Ravello, another highlight of the Amalfi Coast, which we have plenty of time to explore. Ravello not only has a very interesting history and many medieval monuments, but also offers beautiful views over the Amalfi Coast, and villas with stupendous gardens. We pay an extensive visit to the dramatically located Villa Cimbrone, with its amazing gardens and one of the coast's most famous viewpoints. Then we walk back down through the hamlet of Castiglione to the little town of Atrani, passing through the vineyards and lemon groves. In Atrani, one of the best-preserved towns on the coast, we now take the time to look around the narrow little white streets of the town centre, and perhaps have a drink in the square. From here it's now only 15 minutes back to Amalfi, passing along the coast. In the evening you are free to choose from a large choice of restaurants, ranging from simple pizzerias to exclusive restaurants.

Accommodation: Amalfi - Meals included: 1 breakfast

Total walking distance: 6 km. Approx. walking time: 4/4,5 h.

Day 6 By boat to Capri – discovery walk of the island. Optional relaxation in Amalfi

Today we recommend to take the boat to the rightly famous island of Capri, the island which was the pleasure island for Roman emperors, and has never since lost its fame. Here a wonderful roundwalk can be made, starting from Marina Grande, the main harbour, and then through lemon groves and gardens to the central square of the little town of Capri, the famous 'Piazzetta', the centre of mundane life. Then you make a beautiful roundwalk around the eastern part of the island, which shows you most of the 'highlights' of the



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island. These are both cultural and natural wonders, always accompanied with beautiful views in an unrivalled Mediterranean landscape. The walk brings you past the amazing Villa Lysis and the ruins of the Imperial Villa Iovis, one of the villas of the Roman emperor Tiberius. You'll walk past the Arco Naturale, and of course past the Faraglioni, three sea stacks off the south coast, perhaps the most famous and most painted rocks in the world. You have a great picnic lunch in an amazing spot, after which you have time for a coffee or an ice cream. Walking back to the centre you have the opportunity to visit the Certosa and the Gardens of Augustus, where you can also opt to walk down to Marina Piccola, along the spectacular Via Krupp. This walk can be extended or shortened in many ways. You then travel back to Amalfi by boat late in the afternoon. Alternatively, you can opt for a relaxed day in Amalfi with a swim, and perhaps a sea kayaking trip. In the evening you can all go out for dinner together, to perhaps the best pizzeria in town.

Accommodation: Amalfi - Meals included: 1 breakfast

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

Day 7 – Amalfi & the Valle dei Mulini

In the morning, we start to walk inland, along the narrow white washed alleys of Amalfi. Then we walk up (optional bus) to the charming little village of Pontone, once a defensive stronghold for the Republic of Amalfi. Here we walk up onto the narrow ridge of the Torre dello Ziro that contains part of this medieval defence system, in a park-like landscape past shady pine trees and through fields of wild flowers, and enjoy stunning views across the Valle del Dragone to the gardens and villas of Ravello. A series of ascents and descent eventually brings us to the ruins of the Torre dello Ziro, known from the play 'The Duchess of Malfi'. From here we enjoy dramatic views of both Amalfi and Atrani, and the stunning coastline. We retrace our steps to Pontone, before walking into the intriguing 'Valle dei Mulini', the valley of the watermills, with its ruins of Europe's most ancient paper factories, dating back to the 11th century. The path takes us deep into the valley, to the entrance of the nature reserve, with its lush vegetation and waterfalls. We have a great picnic lunch near the river before returning to Amalfi. From here it's about an hour's walk back down to Amalfi, passing through the charming little back streets of the town centre. We will now also have the option to visit the fascinating paper museum, the Museo della Carta. Back in Amalfi there is still some time for a swim or an 'aperitivo'. Then in the evening we all join together for a last great evening meal. We 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: Amalfi - Meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 warm lunch, 1 dinner

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

Day 8 – Arrivederci!

The tour ends in Amalfi after breakfast today. You can make your way to Salerno or Naples, either by boat or bus. A taxi transfer can be arranged on request.



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TOUR DETAILS

ACCOMMODATION & MEALS

All nights are spent in beautiful, characteristic hotels, mostly historical buildings (generally 3/4-star; 4/5-star on some departure dates). All rooms have en-suite facilities.

All accommodations include breakfast. Most evening meals are included, for which we have selected the best available restaurants. On two nights you are free to choose from the wide choice of restaurants in the area. Your guide can give you good tips.

Also, some (picnic) lunches on walking days are included in the tour price. On other days you are free to have your own lunch. Here you have the option of having your lunch in a nice restaurant, or purchasing your supplies for a picnic lunch.

Night 1: The first night is spent in Naples. Your accommodation is a 3-star hotel in an amazing palace, in the heart of the historical centre.

Nights 2 & 3: These two nights you stay in the little village of Bomerano, a rural village on the Agerola plain. To make the most of this amazing, terraced, rural landscape, you stay in a recently renovated agriturismo, where you can indulge in local, often home-made specialties.

Nights 4, 5, 6 & 7: The last four nights are spent in Amalfi, the ancient capital and the centre of the Amalfi Coast, the best possible base to explore without the need for a local bus. Your recently renovated hotel is located in a central position, right in the historical heart of the town, only a few metres from the sea.

UPGRADE/CHANGES IN ACCOMMODATION

On some dates we run an upgraded version of this tour, staying in luxurious 4-star hotels. Look for the 'Premiere Inns' signs.

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

Level: Moderately easy 2/3. Reasonable fitness required, mostly easy paths, no technical difficulties. Some paths 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: Only a small part of the route is waymarked (partly by us); elsewhere it is necessary to follow the route descriptions provided together with the maps. With these it is always possible to find your route. In case you don't feel confident a local guide can be provided for some trails.



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INCLUDED

- Private English-speaking tour leader for 8 days
- Accommodation: 1 night Naples, 4 nights Amalfi in all good ***/****, 2 nights in a beautiful *agriturismo* in Agerola
- Meals: 7 breakfasts, 5 dinners (good restaurants), 1 picnic lunch, 1 warm lunch
- All private transfers as indicated throughout the entire itinerary
- Entrance fees of all sites along the itinerary
- Special activities as outlined in the day-by-day itinerary
- Guest experts for special places
- 24/7 assistance
- Luggage transport
- All gratuities for baggage, porters & hotel service

NOT INCLUDED

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

ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

Arrival: The tour starts in NAPLES, a city with an international airport, and connected to Rome and all other major Italian cities by a frequent (high speed) train service.

A taxi pick-up service can be arranged either from Naples airport or train station.

Departure: The tour ends after breakfast in AMALFI on day 8. A frequent boat or bus service can bring you to either Sorrento or Salerno, 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.



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TOUR VARIATIONS

EXTRA NIGHTS

It is possible to include some extra nights before or after your tour, in any of the accommodations 'en route'. For those who have never been to Naples an extra day here is strongly recommended.

The tour can easily be extended with a few days also in Positano, Ravello, or elsewhere on the Amalfi Coast, Salerno (a nice city and a good base for visiting Paestum), or ROME, or with a few days on the island of Capri or the other islands of the Bay of Naples (see below).

Several good accommodations are available. Details and prices on request.

The tour can also be extended with a few days on a beautiful agriturismo in the Cilento for some relaxation in the countryside. Several superb accommodations are available. Details & prices on request.

Longer and shorter versions of this tour are also available. Prices on request. Have a look at our other Amalfi & Campania tours as well!

Bespoke Adventures

Many of these tours can be turned into Private 'Bespoke Adventures' to accommodate private group travel.

We can organise both "off the shelf" itineraries, as well as create custom itineraries to meet your special needs. Book the dates you want, with the family or friends you wish to bring along!

Longer and shorter versions of this tour are also available. Prices on request.



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