



*Independent walking tour (AMA2A)*

# Best of the Amalfi Coast 'Short Break'

*Amalfi & Atrani, Ravello, 'Sentiero degli Dei', Positano*



## TRIP NOTES

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## INTRODUCTION

*The Amalfi Coast is probably Italy's most beautiful coastline. Located on the southern side of the Sorrento Peninsula, the Costiera Amalfitana is protected from the cold northern winds by its impressive mountains, and therefore has a wonderful climate all year long. This means that the tour is a good option for a great walk even in early spring or late autumn.*

*The landscape is immensely varied and surrounded by infinite ever-changing views. It can be typically Mediterranean, intoxicating with its wild perfumed herbs, myrtle shrubs, thyme, rosemary and mastic trees, or almost alpine with meadows and bare rocks. And cultural heritage abounds! Man has created an incomparable mosaic terraced landscape. Beautiful little churches, ruins of castles and old farmhouses are 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!*

*There are thousands of footpaths on the Amalfi coast, some 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 medieval Republic of Amalfi. But there are many unknown trails which are just as beautiful as well! Going 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 walking tour can be considered the 'classic' tour along the coast, which takes in all the famous coastal villages and the most beautiful walks to be made in the area, some of which are listed among the 'world's best walks'. 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 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 that at just a few hundred metres from the crowds, 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, parts of them are waymarked. Elsewhere you have to follow the route notes provided together with the maps. Average walking times: from approx. 5 to 6 hours each day.*



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## DAY-TO-DAY PROGRAMME

### Day 1 – Arrival in Amalfi

Arrival in Naples (airport) or Salerno (train station). You are met by a taxi (optional) and brought to your hotel in Amalfi. Short visit to the town centre and maybe a swim to wash off the weariness of the journey.

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

### Day 2 – The Torre dello Ziro & Valle dei Mulini

Today you make an initial easy walk, which immediately gives you a good idea of the amazing cultural and natural heritage of the Amalfi Coast. First you walk into the quiet little back alleys of Amalfi, where you can still notice the strong Moorish influence. An ancient flight of steps takes you up underneath the impressive limestone cliffs, towards the little village of Pontone, part of the medieval defence system of the town of Amalfi. The main point of interest is the marvellous Torre dello Ziro, located on a narrow ridge in a park-like landscape, with unforgettable views of Amalfi to the one side and Atrani to the other. This area also offers a number of marvellous picnic spots, all with dramatic views. Then, through the charming village of Pontone itself, you walk into the 'Valle dei Mulini', the valley of the mills, with the ruins of Europe's most ancient paper mills, dating back to the 11th century. The comfortable footpath 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, through spectacular scenery, underneath the towering cliffs, through an almost fairytale-like landscape. Here you can admire a number of beautiful waterfalls. Then you return back down to Amalfi. The path gradually descends past a number of impressive ruins of what were once the first paper mills, adding a mysterious touch to the landscape. Along the last stretch the scenery changes to lemon groves and *maquis*. Back down in Amalfi you can visit the paper museum, before returning to your hotel. As the walk is relatively short you've still got some time left now to wander around in Amalfi or take your time for a swim.

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

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

### Day 3 – Medieval Hamlets of the Amalfi Coast

Today you first take a local bus up to the charming historic village of Ravello, one of the most exclusive villages on the Amalfi Coast, and sought after by artists over the centuries as its lofty position and sunny, dry climate made it an appealing place to writers, artists, musicians and travellers from northern Europe. Boccaccio, DH Lawrence and Richard Wagner are among the more notable guests who have succumbed to its spells. Ravello not only has a very interesting history, and many medieval monuments, but also offers beautiful views over the Amalfi Coast. The French novelist André Gide once described the village as being 'closer to the sky than the seashore'. Ravello also boasts two magnificent villas – the superb 11<sup>th</sup>- century Villa Rufolo, once a papal residence and later the home of Wagner, and Villa Cimbrone, a sumptuous 19<sup>th</sup>- century mansion with fabulous gardens and unequalled views over the Gulf of Salerno. You can take your time to stroll through the village, before starting the walk back down to the coast. Past the dramatically located Villa Cimbrone and the hamlet of Castiglione you first walk through vineyards and lemon groves, then down some medieval steps to the beautiful little village of Atrani. This is certainly one of the best preserved villages on the coast, and you have the chance to look around the narrow little white streets of the village centre. The last short stretch to Amalfi is very scenic and has beautiful viewpoints over the town centre. As the walk is relatively short you've still got some time left now to wander around in Amalfi or go for a swim.

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

*Total walking distance: 9 km. Approx. walking time: 4 h. Ascent & descent: +/- 480 m. (shorter options possible)*



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### Day 4 – Along the 'Path of the Gods' to Positano

You start your walk again in the picturesque whitewashed alleys of Praiano. Along a medieval pilgrim route you then walk uphill towards the monastery of San Domenico, set in stupendous scenery, dominating the coast from its hilltop. Here you can have a little rest before continuing the climb uphill through spectacular scenery with bizarre rock formations and luxurious vegetation. Before you know it you reach one of Italy's most famous footpaths, the 'Sentiero degli Dei'. This path really lives up to its name! Through unique scenery with unrivalled views you reach the hamlet of Nocelle. Passing another spectacular valley you arrive in the little village of Montepertuso. After Montepertuso it's only a short walk down to Positano, but it will take you some time as there are many photo opportunities along the route. Positano itself is considered to be one of Italy's most beautiful villages, and certainly one of the pearls of the Amalfi Coast. After a stroll through its alleys you settle in at your hotel in the centre, at walking distance from the large beach.

**Accommodation: Positano - Hotel \*\*\***

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

### Day 5 – Positano seen from above

First you take the local bus up to Montepertuso, where you start a very scenic walk around the upper valley of Positano. Following ancient footpaths through the forest and past marvellous viewpoints, you climb up towards Santa Maria al Castello, the old 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 wooded area in a park-like landscape, you then head down to the Caserma Forestale (the forestry service hut). Those who feel like it could 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 zigzags back down to Montepertuso. Along another medieval mule track you then return to Positano again.

**Accommodation: Positano - Hotel \*\*\***

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

### Day 6 – Departure

After breakfast you return by boat or bus and train to Naples and by shuttle bus to the airport. An extra night in a hotel can be booked upon request.



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## TOUR DETAILS

### ACCOMMODATION & MEALS

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

All accommodations are on a **B&B** basis. No evening meals are included so you are free to choose from the wide choice of restaurants in the area. Your accommodation holder can give you good tips. On some occasions you can also choose to eat at the premises of the hotel.

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.

**Nights 1, 2 & 3:** The first three nights are spent in Amalfi, ancient towns of the Amalfi Coast, in a welcoming and comfortable 3-star hotel, which has recently been renovated, or a beautiful 4-star hotel in the heart of the town. All hotels are centrally located, at walking distance from the sea and all major monuments of the medieval town centre.

**Nights 4 & 5:** The final two nights are spent in the romantic & fashionable little village of Positano, with its characteristic houses built onto the steep slopes of the mountains. You stay in either a comfortable 3-star hotel, or a larger 4-star hotel. All hotels are at walking distance from the seashore (along Positano's charming little streets/steps).

### INCLUDED

- 5 nights accommodation - BB
- 3 nights Hotel\*\*\* in Amalfi
- 2 nights Hotel\*\*\* in Positano
- Extensive route notes, with description of the route
- Entrance ticket to the stunning Villa Cimbrone
- Maps at 1 : 25.000 scale or bigger
- GPS tracks of each walk
- Luggage transfer on day 4
- 24/7 h local assistance

### NOT INCLUDED

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



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## ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

**Arrival:** The tour starts in AMALFI, connected to Salerno by a frequent bus (and boat) service and with Naples by a less frequent bus service. In the summer there are direct boats from Naples. A taxi pick-up service can be arranged either from Naples (airport or train station), or from Pompeii or Castellammare di Stabia, which can both be easily reached from Naples with the local Circumvesuviana 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:** Only a small part of the route is waymarked (partly by us); elsewhere you have to follow the route descriptions provided together with the maps. With these you will always be able to find your route. In case you don't feel confident a local guide can be provided for some 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 also an 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 **Naples** or on the island of **Capri**. Several good accommodations are available. Details and prices on request.

### SHORTER & LONGER VERSIONS

Shorter versions, as well as longer versions of this tour are also available. Bespoke tours, with a slightly modified programme, suiting your agenda can be organised as well. Prices on request. Please contact us for more info.

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