



Independent walking tour (AMA7)

Essential Amalfi

the best walks

All highlights of the world's most beautiful coast - including Ravello, Positano and the 'Sentiero degli Dei' - in the space of just a few days



TRIP NOTES

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****GENIUS LOCI TRAVEL - The Real Spirit Of Italy****



INTRODUCTION

For those who have little time available but want to do a few of the best walks, Genius Loci Travel has developed this special tour, which brings you not only to the famous coastal resort of Amalfi, but also includes the other highlights and lets you discover a number of 'hidden treasures' further inland. Amalfi, is the capital city of the Coast, and located in its very heart, so everything can easily be discovered from here.

The Amalfi Coast is probably Italy's most beautiful coastline, so it's no surprise that tourists have been flocking here for centuries. More recently, its amazing network of footpaths has been re-discovered too, and it's just as well, because walking along the Amalfi Coast is something everyone should do at least once in their lives! The landscape of the Costiera Amalfitana is immensely varied and surrounded by infinite ever-changing views. Along the coast 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 long. 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 literally thousands of footpaths here. Some are at least a thousand years old, like the Maestra dei Villaggi – the 'main road' of the Republic of Amalfi. Some have become famous recently, such as the Sentiero degli Dei, the 'Path of the Gods' (but the lesser known paths 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 scrub and woods, living rocks and chestnut woods.

You will mainly walk along well maintained footpaths and paved alleyways, and 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 it is not without 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' and 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. 4 - 5 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 a beautiful walk delving into 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 underneath the impressive limestone cliffs leads up the little village of Pontone, part of the medieval defence system 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 and Atrani. This area also offers some nice 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, across 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 writers, artists, musicians and travellers from Northern Europe over the centuries due to its lofty position and sunny, dry climate. 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 sea'. Ravello also boasts two magnificent villas – the superb 11th-century Villa Rufolo, 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. 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, where 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. Again the walk is relatively short, so you'll still have some time left to explore the streets of Amalfi or go for a swim.

Accommodation: Amalfi - Hotel ***

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



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

Today you first take a local bus up to the small village of Bomerano, on the Agerola high plain. Here you find the beginning of the famous 'Sentiero degli Dei' ('Footpath of the Gods'), one of Italy's most famous footpaths, and certainly a walk with unrivalled views. After a very panoramic stretch with views over the whole Amalfi Coast, stretching out as far as the island of Capri, you reach the junction for the monastery of San Domenico, set in stupendous scenery, dominating the coast from its hilltop (optional detour along a medieval pilgrim route). You then continue on a more or less level path through spectacular scenery with bizarre rock formations and luxurious vegetation. Here the 'Sentiero degli Dei' really lives up to its name! Through unique scenery with spectacular 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 a bit of time as there are so 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 could relax for a bit or go for a swim at the large beach, before taking the boat back to Amalfi in the evening.

Accommodation: Amalfi - Hotel ***

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

Day 5 – Departure

After breakfast you return by train, bus or boat to Naples (airport).



TOUR DETAILS

ACCOMMODATION & MEALS

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

Accommodations is on **B&B** basis (no evening meals included). In the evening you are free to choose from the wide choice of restaurants in the area for your dinner. 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 - 4: All nights are spent in Amalfi, the ancient capital of the Amalfi Coast, in a welcoming and comfortable 3-star hotel, which has been recently renovated or a beautiful 4-star hotel in the heart of the village. All hotels are centrally located, at walking distance from the sea and all major monuments of the medieval town centre.

UPGRADE/CHANGES IN ACCOMMODATION

It is possible to book an upgrade. Details and prices on request.

INCLUDED

- 4 nights Hotel in Amalfi *** - BB
- Entrance ticket to the stunning Villa Cimbrone
- 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
- 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



LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

Moderately easy (2-3): Mostly easy walks, though some include walking uphill, sometimes on paths with rough surfaces. Many of the walks involve climbing or descending flights of steps. On most 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: Most trails are waymarked and can easily be found; 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.

ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

Arrival: The tour starts in AMALFI, connected with 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 AMALFI. A frequent bus (or boat) service can bring you to Salerno, 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.

TOUR VARIATIONS

EXTRA NIGHTS

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

Also a shorter 4-day version of this tour is available.

At the beginning or the end of the tour there is also an opportunity to visit Naples and/or Pompeii. 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.

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