



Independent walking tour (AMA6)

Highlights of the Amalfi Coast & the Sorrento Peninsula

*Amalfi, Ravello, 'Sentiero degli Dei', Positano & Sorrento
- plus a day in Pompeii and a day on Capri*



TRIP NOTES

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INTRODUCTION

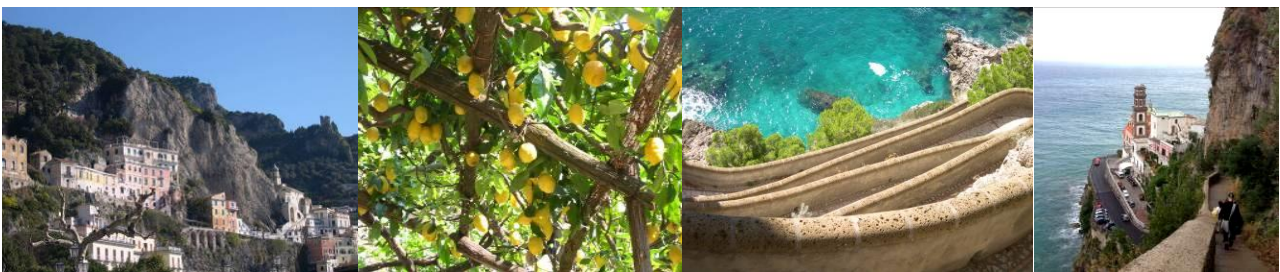
This short walking tour is the perfect choice for those who want to see both sides of the Peninsula: Amalfi & Sorrento. On this tour you'll do all 'classic' walks along the Amalfi Coast. You'll visit the famous must-see villages: Amalfi itself, but also Atrani, wonderfully preserved through the centuries, Ravello with its magnificent villas and of course the scenic and fashionable Positano. And you'll have the time to visit the nice town of Sorrento, and from here do some 'touristy' excursions, like the world famous excavations at Pompeii, or the island of Capri. But also here we'll give you the option for a nice roundwalk. And of course you'll have the chance to walk up the world most famous volcano, Mt. Vesuvius.

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 are 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.

Other 'classics' of the area include the great roundwalk on Capri, which apart from being touristy, is also a stunningly beautiful island, with a lush nature and an amazing cultural heritage. And the climb up to Mt. Vesuvius, perhaps the world most famous volcano, can be the litteral highlight of the tour.

You will walk along well maintained footpaths, through attractive countryside, with wonderful terraced lemon groves, vineyards and cultural treasures like rural chapels, ancient farmhouses, watermills and wonderful villas and villages, where you can relax with a drink. It only takes a little effort to get 'off the beaten track', only 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 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 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, 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.



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Optional extra day: Into the Valle delle Ferriere

Today you make a spectacular roundwalk in one of southern Italy's most stunning Nature Reserves, the 'Valle delle Ferriere'. From Amalfi you first take the bus to Scala. From here you first walk to the stunning hamlet of Minuta, from where you have great views over Amalfi, Ravello & Atrani. Then you climb up a flight of stairs and enter the Valle delle Ferriere Nature Reserve. You will see some spectacular scenery, walking over comfortable footpaths underneath the towering cliffs, and passing close to some little waterfalls. Though close to Amalfi, the scenery looks like it belongs to a different world: one of isolated mountains.

After crossing the main stream, the path gradually descends through the forest towards the little village of Pogerola, dominating the valley of Amalfi from the west. From here a beautiful medieval mule track curves down to Amalfi, amidst lemon groves and maquis, with nice views over the valley.

Accommodation: Amalfi - Hotel ***

Total walking distance: 11 km. Approx. walking time: 5 h. Ascent & descent: + 300 m./- 700 m.

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

By bus you drive up to the small village of Bomerano, on the Agerola high plain. Here the famous 'Sentiero degli Dei' ('Footpath of the Gods') starts, 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 up to 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). Then a more or less level path leads 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 unrivalled views you reach the hamlet of Nocelle. Passing another spectacular valley you arrive in the little village of Montepertuso. From there 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. Take your time for a stroll through its alleys and down to the beach, before taking the bus on to Sorrento, where you settle in at your centrally located hotel (your luggage will be waiting for you). At night you can go for dinner in one of the nice nearby restaurants and perhaps admire the Bay of Naples with the Vesuvius, from one of the stunning panoramic terraces.

Accommodation: Sorrento - Hotel */******

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

Day 5 – Pompeii & Vesuvius

You travel by local train to Pompeii, considered to be the world's most fascinating ruins. A visit to Pompeii gives you an amazing insight into the life of a Roman city, especially when walking along its chariot-marked back streets. You 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. In case you want to make a great roundwalk as well, we recommend climbing Mount Vesuvius, the volcano that with the fatal eruption of 79 AD completely destroyed the bustling city of Pompeii. You can make an amazing roundwalk here, completely different from the standard visit to Vesuvius (and normally closed to the public), which makes you feel like you're in a completely different world! What is less known to many is that also the 'new' town of Pompeii is definitely worth the detour, if only for its amazing sanctuary. Go for a stroll here and then have an 'aperitivo' to look back on a great day.

Accommodation: Sorrento - Hotel */******

Total walking distance: 11 km. Approx. walking time: 4 h. Ascent & descent: +/- 600 m. (shorter options available)



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Day 6 – A classic island walk on Capri

The last walking day is dedicated to the famous island of Capri to see the places that have inspired so many over the centuries and always attracted the global jet set. Of course you don't just see the 'touristy' highlights, you also make a beautiful roundwalk along the almost pristine southern coast. First you pass the 'Piazzetta' and the charming backstreets of Capri, with their clear Moresque influence, before walking up to the ruins of one of the most impressive Roman villas in the area, Villa Iovis, which is in an exceptional location with world-class views. On your way up you also pass the wonderful Villa Lysis, rather unknown, but one of the best spots in Capri! Descending towards the untouched coastline of the southern part of the island, you come across the Arco Naturale, a natural bridge, many grottos and finally the famous Faraglioni, three small uninhabited islands, just off the south coast. Through the Gardens of Augustus and the impressive Via Krupp, perhaps the world's most beautiful pedestrian way, you descend to the charming Marina Piccola, where you travel back by local bus to your hotel. This walk can be extended or shortened in many ways, depending on how much time you want to dedicate to walking, relaxing or shopping.

Accommodation: Sorrento - Hotel */******

Total walking distance: 11 km. Approx. walking time: 4 h. Ascent & descent: +/- 550 m.

Optional Extra Days Sorrento

From Sorrento you can undertake several other interesting excursions apart from the 'classics', the day-trip to the island of Capri and the visit to Pompeii. Of course we suggest to do both! In alternative - or in case you will want to book some extra days, there are also several nice options for an easy roundwalk, and perhaps a swim. A beautiful short walk brings you to Capo di Sorrento, and from there down to the great Roman villa on the headland. This was also the Queen's favourite bathing place, a beautiful little bay. Depending on whether you want to extend the walk you can reach the small fishing village of Marina di Puolo, before returning to Sorrento.

Another great daywalk brings you to Punta Campanella, the Finis Terrae, or 'Land's End' of the Sorrento Peninsula, where you are face to face with the island of Capri. You can take a local bus to Termini, the last village before the headland. From here you then follow the medieval steps up to the small church of San Costanzo, where you have 360° views, over both the Bay of Naples and the Amalfi Coast. A spectacular path, running along the impressive cliffs of the headland, then brings you to the tip of the peninsula, where according to legend Ulysses erected a temple in honour of Athena. In some parts the path can be a bit demanding, though never too difficult. The return, between Punta Campanella and Termini, is on a very comfortable path, the old Roman Via Minerva, with great views of Capri and a number of medieval watchtowers, which once protected the coast. From Termini you then take the local bus back to Sorrento (unless you want to walk the whole way).

Accommodation: Sorrento - Hotel */******

Total walking distance: 7 km. Approx. walking time: 4,5 h. Ascent & descent: +/- 450 m.

Day 7 – Departure

After breakfast you return by train, bus or boat to Naples (airport). Extra nights 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 Atrani or Amalfi, ancient towns of the Amalfi Coast, in a welcoming and comfortable 3-star hotel or a beautiful 4-star hotel. All hotels are centrally located, at walking distance from the sea and all major monuments of the medieval town centre.

Nights 4, 5 & 6: The final three nights are spent in beautiful Sorrento, with its charming historic centre and great parks and terraces overlooking the Bay of Naples. You stay in either a comfortable 3-star hotel or a beautiful 4-star hotel. All hotels are located in the centre and are at walking distance from the train station and harbour.

INCLUDED

- 6 nights accommodation - BB
- 3 nights Hotel*** in Amalfi
- 3 nights Hotel*** in Sorrento
- Extensive route notes, with description of the route & tourist information
- Maps at 1 : 25.000 scale or more detailed
- GPS tracks of each walk
- Luggage transfer on day 4
- 24/7 h local assistance

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



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ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

Arrival: The tour starts in AMALFI, connected with Salerno by frequent bus (and boat) service and with Naples by 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 SORRENTO. A frequent train service can bring you to Naples, while a frequent bus service can bring you directly to Naples Airport.

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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