



Guided cycling tour (BGSA)

Along Sorrento to the Amalfi Coast

*The full cycling loop of the Sorrento Peninsula: from Castellammare
via Sorrento & Capri to Positano, Amalfi & Vietri sul Mare*



TRIP NOTES 2024

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INTRODUCTION

The Sorrento peninsula, neatly situated between the Gulfs of Naples and Salerno, is a region of staggering natural beauty and cultural treasures. Best known for its medieval coastal towns and inland hamlets such as Amalfi, Positano, Ravello and Sorrento, it is also home to several hidden marvels. Small back streets, isolated hamlets, natural reserves, ancient paper mills and wild mountain scenery are only a small distance away from the busy, touristy centres of its main towns, waiting to be explored by the traveller in the know. Cycling here with a local guide will give you the chance to cycle some of the most stunning roads you've ever cycled, to visit some of the highlights of the area, but also to see some of the 'minor' sites, hidden treasures 'off-the-beaten-track'. This tour gives you the opportunity to discover both the busy, touristy and the quiet, hidden, but no less spectacular, parts of the Amalfi Coast & Sorrento Peninsula.

This cycling tour gives you the chance to do the full 'loop' of the whole Peninsula. Starting in the ancient town of Castellammare di Stabia, in the shade of imposing Mount Vesuvius (just like nearby Pompeii, and also of Roman origin), it brings you first to Sorrento, and then around the very tip of the peninsula, 'face-to-face' with Capri, to Sant'Agata sui Due Golfi, along quiet little winding roads with amazing views to both sides. On the third day it will take you to the now more famous southern side of the peninsula, the stunning Amalfi Coast. With its towering cliffs and picturesque coves this is definitely one of the most beautiful coastlines in Europe, with a tradition as one of the premier tourist destinations in Italy. Cycling along the amazingly scenic coastal road is one of the experiences you'll never forget!

You will have time to explore Sorrento, Positano and Amalfi. But also to stroll through the streets of the little fishing village of Cetara, delightful Minori and tiny whitewashed Atrani. You will marvel at the location of Ravello, high up on a rocky cliff, while visiting its world-famous villas and gardens. You will cross the bridge over the amazing deeply-eroded 'fjord' of Furore, explore mundane Positano and cycle through the little hamlets of Praiano and Conca dei Marini. You'll have the time to visit the Duomo and its Paradise Cloister at Amalfi, and can stop for a cup of tea in the little teahouse in the gardens of the majestic Villa Cimbrone at Ravello. Of course we will take our time for a hearty lunch in a small 'trattoria' and taste the area's renowned 'limoncello' lemon liquor.

On this amazing cycling adventure you will discover several hidden aspects of Sorrento & the Amalfi Coast and see for yourself that this area has become Italy's most famous coastline with good reason. It will become clear that it only takes a little effort to get 'off the beaten track', finding yourself surrounded by nature at just a few hundred metres from the crowds. In short, you'll explore this delightful corner of Italy in a totally different way.



Please note: this is a moderate tour which is suitable for all those who are in a good general physical condition. On some of the stretches you may encounter some longer climbs. Rides are not very long, leaving plenty of time for sightseeing. Average cycling times: approx. 3-5 hours each day.



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DAY-TO-DAY PROGRAMME

Day 0 – Naples (or Pompeii)

N.B. If you arrive early during the day, before travelling to Castellammare you can easily visit the world-famous archaeological site in Pompeii. It is also possible to make a daytrip to Pompeii (and Mt. Vesuvius) from Castellammare (15 minutes away). Several hotels can be booked in Naples and Pompeii, according to your wishes (either 'downtown' centrally located, or near the harbour or train station, ranging from 3- to 5-star).

Day 1 – Arrival in Castellammare di Stabia

After your arrival at Castellammare di Stabia you can settle in at your hotel. In case you are early you can go for a stroll through the village, or even make a short excursion to Pompeii. Towards the end of the afternoon you will meet your tour guide and the rest of the group and get hold of your bikes. Tonight we eat all together in a nice restaurant near the hotel.

Accommodation: Hotel in Castellammare

Day 2 – From Castellammare to the tip of the Sorrento Peninsula - with a view of Capri

On the first day of your trip we will start out from Castellammare and head for splendid Sorrento, tourist capital of the area, perched on high vertical limestone cliffs above the sea, with great views over the bay of Naples. It's for that reason that the rich and famous of Northern Europe towards the end of the 19th century started to settle here. Of course we take some time to have a look around here in the old town centre, still surrounded by its medieval city walls and we'll enjoy a great lunch overlooking the sea.

Then we cycle on, high above the coast towards the very end of the peninsula, Punta Campanella. From the very last village (appropriately named 'Termini') we have a great view of Capri. There is the possibility to make a short, but challenging, extra loop, descending towards the delightful beach of Marina del Cantone and up again. We then return along the ridge, with wonderful views of the Bay of Naples and Mount Vesuvius, to the charming village of Sant'Agata sui Due Golfi, beautifully situated on the ridge that separates the Amalfi Coast from the rest of the Sorrento Peninsula. Here we settle in our nice hotel. This area is known for its amazing food, so tonight you have all kind of possibilities for a great dinner, ranging from a great pizza, a family-style 'trattoria' or a Michelin-starred restaurant.

Accommodation: Hotel/ Agriturismo in Sant'Agata

Distance: 40 km. – Cycling time: 3,5 h.

Day 3 – From Sant'Agata through the heart of the Amalfi Coast: Positano & Amalfi

From Sant'Agata sui Due Golfi we start with an amazingly scenic ride along the ridge. Here we can fully appreciate its name 'on the two Bays': on our left we have the stunning Bay of Naples, dominated by Mt. Vesuvius, on our right we have the Gulf of Salerno with the stunning Amalfi Coast and the Cilento National Park in the background. After the descend to the small hamlet of the Colle di Fontanelle, it is then only a short flat ride to the Colli di San Pietro. From here it is a stunning decent towards Positano: the coast here is wild and rugged, and offers some amazing views. Whizzing down this part of the road, looking out over splendid Positano, is a wonderful experience, definitely one of the nicest stretches to do on a bike worldwide!

Just before arriving in Positano, easily the most scenic – and mundane – of the towns on the coast, we make a short stop, to admire its unique setting. Of course we then take some time to explore the town. The ride through the colourful streets of Positano – although busy – is something special. We then park our bikes and start exploring its scenic and colourful alleyways on foot –necessary as most of the small back streets you want to



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have a look at consist of flights of steps! You are free to have lunch, perhaps you can grab a gelato, or you might want to eat a pizza on the beach. Then we all gather again and continue our ride along the beautiful winding coastal road, the dramatic ‘*Strada Amalfitana*’, considered by some to be ‘the most scenic ride in the world’. Now we are heading for Amalfi, the real ‘heart of the Amalfi Coast. Shortly after Positano we’ll pass through Praiano, from where we’ll have perhaps the best views of Positano, with Capri and the islands of the Sirens in the background. Photo opportunities abound ! After Praiano we’ll pass the spectacular ‘fjord’ of Furore, a deep canyon opening up to the sea, in which a small fishing village clings to the rocky cliffs. Once we reach Amalfi it’s time for an ‘aperitivo’ and some perhaps want to climb up the stairs to the beautiful Duomo.

A short ride then takes us past stunning Atrani, nestled in a narrow valley under the towering rocks, virtually unchanged since many centuries to charming Minori, with its nice little centre and beautiful seaside boulevard, our base for the last two nights. After settling in at the hotel you can relax and enjoy a stroll through the nice whitewashed streets of the village, before going out for dinner in one of the nice restaurants or pizzeria’s.

Accommodation: Hotel in Minori/Maiori

Distance: 40 km. – Cycling time: 4 h.

Day 4 – From Minori to Ravello & Vietri sul Mare: a last long look at the wonderful Amalfi Coast

Those who are ready for a challenge can join in for the ride up to Ravello: a short but challenging ride. Others can sleep in for a bit and enjoy the scenery. After a leisurely breakfast you can then walk down to the beach and enjoy another swim in the crystal clear waters. Halfway the morning we’ll regroup and then hop on our bikes, heading for Maiori. For Ravello we start with a short climb and then a flattish road towards Castiglione, once part of the defence system of the Amalfi Republic. From here we then cycle up to marvellous Ravello, which is quite a climb, but rewarded by amazing views. In Ravello we of course take our time to explore the village and perhaps visit one of its stunning gardens.

We then cycle back down to the coast and now head for Maiori, the largest town on the coast. A short flat stretch, and then the road goes up again, to the headland of Capo d’Orso, the highest point of the road, and a wonderful outlook over the whole of the Amalfi Coast, the Cilento and Capri. After admiring the view we start descending, along a beautiful winding road through lemon groves, forests and dramatic cliffs, until we arrive at the idyllic village of Cetara, named after the Roman ‘*cetus*’ (large fish), the origin of our word cetaceans. Still today it is a real fishing village, which produces some of the world’s finest tuna fish and anchovies delicacies, and dolphins can often be spotted near the coast. Here we can opt to eat a sandwich and perhaps have a swim. Then we continue along the coast to Vietri, known for its ceramics. Here we can opt to have a drink in the square or to cycle down to the beach, before returning to Minori again. In the evening we eat in a nice nearby restaurant.

Accommodation: Hotel in Minori/Maiori

Distance: 35 / 50 km. – Cycling time: 3/ 5 h.

Day 5 – End of the tour

The tour ends in Minori after breakfast today. By bus you can easily travel to Salerno, from where there are many trains to all major towns. A taxi transfer to Salerno, Naples or other destinations can be arranged on request.



TOUR DETAILS

ACCOMMODATION & MEALS

All nights are spent in beautiful, characteristic hotels (generally 3/4-star). All rooms have en-suite facilities.

Dinners are included on all nights, except for one, when you are free to organise your own dinner in one of the many restaurants in Minori.

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.

Night 1: The first night is spent in a centrally located hotel in Castellammare di Stabia. The hotel is close to the train station, so a good base for excursions to Pompeii and Herculaneum.

Night 2: Tonight you stay in a nice hotel located in Sant'Agata sui Due Golfi, with views of both the Gulf of Naples and the Gulf of Salerno.

Nights 3 & 4: The final nights you will stay in a nice 4-star hotel in Minori. The hotel is within walking distance of all the major points of interest of the town, as well as from the nice beach.

UPGRADE/CHANGES IN ACCOMMODATION

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

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

Easy (2): Mostly easy to moderate rides but with some longer climbs. All roads are well paved and mainly quiet with limited traffic except for some periods during summer and holidays. Extensions are possible on some days.

Fitness: Some experience of bicycle touring and a good general physical condition will certainly make your travel experience more enjoyable. You should be able to cycle for several hours a day, also in hot weather conditions.



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INCLUDED

- Private English-speaking tour leader for the duration of the tour
- Professional guiding service for each activity
- Accommodation: 4 nights in good ***/**** hotels: 1 night Castellammare di Stabia, 1 night Sant'Agata sui Due Golfi, 2 nights Minori/Maiori
- Support van & mechanical assistance for the duration of the tour
- All private & public transfers as indicated throughout the entire itinerary
- Special activities as outlined in the day-by-day itinerary
- 24/7 assistance
- Luggage transport

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 (road racing bicycles available on request)

ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

Arrival: The tour starts in CASTELLAMMARE DI STABIA, which can easily be reached from Naples by train. Naples has an international airport. From Rome (and many other cities) Naples can easily be reached by train.

Departure: The tour ends in MINORI/MAIORI. By shuttle bus you can easily get to Naples.

TOUR VARIATIONS

EXTRA NIGHTS

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

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