



Independent walking tour (CIL5)

Palinuro & the South Coast of the Cilento National Park

The mythical headland of Palinuro and the pristine coast of Camerota



TRIP NOTES

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INTRODUCTION

The region of Campania marks the real starting point of southern Italy. It has been sought after since Roman times when it was labelled the Campania Felix, or 'happy land', hardly a surprise considering the fact that it includes the great city of Naples, beautiful countryside, Roman ruins, small islands and stretches of spectacular coast. On the southern side of the Sorrento Peninsula, the Costiera Amalfitana is probably one of Europe's most well-known and dramatic stretches of coastline, with its towering cliffs and picturesque coves.

But Campania's real secret is located south of Salerno, immediately beyond the wonderful Greek temples of Paestum. Here the coastline bulges out into an expanse of mountainous landmass known as the Cilento, now a National Park with World Heritage listing. The Cilento coast is fairly rocky territory, with the crystalline sea lapping at the shore. There is a wild kind of beauty here; rocky ridges set between small picturesque inlets and richly scented pinewoods backing onto wide sandy beaches. Aleppo pines loom over the multicoloured undergrowth of myrtle and cactuses; whilst huge, centuries-old olive trees grow right down to the shore. Inland the Cilento is largely undisturbed by the 21st century and you will enjoy visiting medieval and quaint villages where the traditional way of life is still evident.

But perhaps the main attraction of the Cilento National Park is its stunning coastline, intimately linked to the classical myths of Odysseus and Aeneas, as both the Siren Leucosia and the nymph Kamaraton, as well as Aeneas' mate Palinuro have given their names to the most prominent spots. This mythical atmosphere, and the marvellous landscape make this area a really enchanting place to visit in every season of the year. In wintertime the clear sky offers you superb views over the Amalfi Coast, Cape Palinuro and Calabria; in springtime the flowering brooms cover the hills in a golden-yellow hue, and during the summer you can swim in the very clean sea. In autumn the sea temperature is still warm and on clear days you can take relaxing walks.

And, last-but-not-least: some of Italy's most beautiful beaches can be found along the south coast of the Cilento! Discover the beautiful Cala Bianca, the Bay of Infreschi and walk down to the beach of Marcellino, only to mention a few. Many beaches can only be reached on foot or by boat. For which reason they are often, with the exception of the short Summer season, almost empty.

This tour will make you discover all the most beautiful beaches of this area, as a large part of the tour is along the coast. But you will also walk through pristine natural areas and attractive countryside, with all their cultural treasures like rural chapels, ancient farmhouses, old watermills and charming medieval villages, like San Giovanni a Piro, Marina di Camerota and Scario.



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. 4-6 h. each day.



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DAY-TO-DAY PROGRAMME

Day 1 – Arrival in Pisciotta / Palinuro

Arrival at the Pisciotta/Palinuro train station (a 2-hour journey from Naples). Here you are met by your taxi for a short transfer to your accommodation. Leave your luggage in the accommodation and take your time to go for a short stroll already. Then walk back to the hotel to refresh and enjoy a typical dinner of local cuisine.

Accommodation: Palinuro - Hotel / Agriturismo ***

N.B. It is also possible to start this tour in the beautiful village of Pisciotta. From there a beautiful walk through forest and olive groves then brings you down to Palinuro. Prices on request.

Day 2 – Exploring Palinuro

Today you'll enjoy a great roundwalk, starting directly from your accommodation, onto the mythical promontory of Cape Palinuro, named after one of the mates of Aeneas who drowned here. From the little fishermen's harbour, you then walk up to the light house on top of Capo Palinuro. You will walk through shady pine woods and fragrant Mediterranean shrub land along well-maintained paths and gravel roads. From the light house you enjoy a magnificent view on the village of Palinuro and the Cilento Coast and part of the inland, with views reaching as far as the headland of Punta Licosa and Monte Stella. You then descend to the beautiful sandy beach of Marinella, a favourite among locals, where you can have lunch and a swim. Strong walkers may consider extending the Capo Palinuro walk to include the Molpa Hill, on which you'll come across the ruins of a medieval castle, from where the view over the surrounding area is stunning. Also could you continue to the Arco Naturale, making this into a whole day excursion. But of course you should also consider to take a boat tour to the beautiful 'Grotta Azzurra', perhaps not as famous as the one in Capri, but arguably more beautiful (and definitely less costly & less touristy!).

Accommodation: Palinuro - Hotel / Agriturismo ***

Total walking distance: 18 km. Approx. walking time: 5 h. Ascent & descent: +/- 450 m. (shorter options available)

N.B. For those who want to enjoy more of the stunning scenery of Capo Palinuro and perhaps want to visit the famous 'Blue Grotto' (Grotta Azzurra) and take time for a swim on one of the great beaches, we recommended an extra night in Palinuro. Prices on request.

Day 3 – From Palinuro to Marina di Camerota

Today you'll head for your next accommodation, in the charming seaside village of Marina di Camerota. Straight from your accommodation you first walk a short stretch through olive groves and along the river, then you start climbing up into the first hills above the coast between Palinuro and Marina di Camerota. This is a beautiful walk, with great views over the blue Mediterranean. You'll walk partly through forest and Mediterranean scrubland, partly through farmland. You walk along the ruins of old farmsteads and past the medieval chapel of San Cono. Along a stunning trail you descend back to the coast again. The last stretch to the charming village of Marina di Camerota is along the coast again. There are several nice beaches in isolated inlets, so perhaps there is the option for a swim. Or you can opt to go for a stroll in the village itself, with its clear South American influence, before checking into your hotel.

Accommodation: Marina di Camerota - Hotel ***

Total walking distance: 16 km. Approx. walking time: 4-5 h. Ascent & descent: + 450 m./- 500 m. (longer options available)



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Day 4 – Along the 'Costa degli Infreschi'

Today you'll enjoy a coastal walk along one of the most unspoiled stretches of coastline in southern Italy, with the chance to enjoy its perfectly clean seawater (certified by a 'Blue Flag'). This is the so-called Costa degli Infreschi, named after the Roman harbour of Porto degli Infreschi, where you can find a freshwater spring in a grotto. The walk starts from the charming harbour of Marina di Camerota, where you can make a short coffee stop, buy picnic supplies and make arrangements for your (optional) return by boat. Then you'll enjoy absolutely superb sightseeing along the ancient footpath which connects the village of Marina di Camerota to the ancient Roman harbour. You'll walk past a series of grottos and beaches, and reach the first medieval watchtower. Follows a short section more inland through olive groves and scrubland. Then you descend to the next little inlet, which is reminiscent of the desolate beaches on a tropical island. Another hour along a beautiful trail brings you to the Porto degli Infreschi. Upon arrival on the beach here a lunch can be cooked by the local fishermen (optional). Return either on foot or by boat to Marina di Camerota. In the evening you are free to arrange your own dinner.

Accommodation: Marina di Camerota - Hotel ***

Total walking distance: 7 km. Approx. walking time: 3,5 h. Ascent & descent: +/- 200 m. (longer options available)

Day 5 – From Licusati to San Giovanni a Piro

A short transfer brings you to the small mountain hamlet of Licusati. Here you pick up your picnic supplies before embarking on a great walk along the slopes of the Monte Bulgheria. There are several options, either along the real ridge, or along the lower slopes first. Part of the walk goes up gently through the olive groves and orchards, past a nice rural chapel and through the meadows. Towards the ridge the scenery becomes more mountainous and rockier, with great views both towards the south over the clear Mediterranean (often it's possible to see Sicily from here) and towards the rugged inland. You have the option to climb up to the real top, which on clear days rewards you with amazing views over the whole Cilento, the Gulf of Policastro and Calabria. Then you descend through the forest towards the beautiful small village of San Giovanni a Piro, set in a stunning location overlooking the Gulf of Policastro. You have the time for a stroll and a drink in the old town, before settling in your welcoming family run hotel. Dinner is on the premises of your hotel tonight.

Accommodation: San Giovanni a Piro – Hotel * / Agriturismo**

Total walking distance: 10 km. Approx. walking time: 4-4,5 h. Ascent & descent: + 450 m./- 250 m.

N.B. It is possible to walk from Marina di Camerota to the beautiful village of Licusati, a small hamlet completely off-the-beaten-track, which yet boasts one of the oldest Byzantine churches as well as stunning mountain scenery, and stay overnight there. The perfect integration for the beautiful coastal walks already featured in this tour, to give you the 'complete pictures' of this beautiful part of Italy'. The next morning you then walk on to San Giovanni a Piro. Prices & availability on request.

Day 6 – Between Monte Bulgheria & the beaches of the Masseta

Today you have several options for a great roundwalk or a more relaxed day. We recommend however to go for the roundwalk along the ancient church of Pietrasanta, standing alone on a sheer cliff above the old village, from where you can easily reach the area of Ciolandra, for some superb views over the Gulf of Policastro and the mountains of Calabria. This walk brings you first through the alleys of the medieval town, then along ancient steps you'll head to the church. After a pleasant walk through the forest and *maquis* you will be in a more mountainous and rocky landscape, with great views both towards the south over the clear Mediterranean (often it's possible to see Sicily from here) and towards the rugged inland. From here there are several paths down to the coast: you can opt to hike down to one of the stunning remote beaches (and return by boat), or you can opt for the nice walk down to the



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charming seaside village of Scario, one of the prettiest villages of the area. From here you can either walk back up to San Giovanni, or relax on the beach and use the (optional) transfer back up.

Accommodation: San Giovanni a Piro – Hotel * / Agriturismo**

Total walking distance: 10 km. Approx. walking time: 4-4,5 h. Ascent & descent: + 250 m./ - 650 m. (several options available)

Day 7 - Departure

After breakfast you are brought to the train station, from where you return to Naples, Salerno or Rome.



TOUR DETAILS

ACCOMMODATION & MEALS

Accommodation is mainly on a half-board basis (depending on your choice of hotels – see inclusions) in good 3-star hotels and comfortable agriturismos (comparable to a 3-star hotel). All rooms have en-suite facilities.

On the evenings that you will be free to organise your dinner, you have a wide choice of restaurants in the area. 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.

Nights 1 & 2: The first 2 nights are spent in Palinuro either in a nice agriturismo, or in a nice 3-star hotel, at walking distance from the sea. On request we can book a beautiful 4-star sea side hotel with a private beach.

Nights 3 & 4: These two nights are spent in a comfortable boutique hotel in the small coastal town of Marina di Camerota, gateway to the unspoilt 'Costa degli Infreschi'.

Nights 5 & 6: The last two nights are spent in a nice 3-star hotel, with a great restaurant, in the small village of San Giovanni a Piro, overlooking the Gulf of Policastro. In alternative we can book a beautiful agriturismo.

N.B. In Licusati there are several options, ranging from a nice agriturismo, to simple B&B's. Prices & availability on request.

UPGRADE/CHANGES IN ACCOMMODATION

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



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INCLUDED

- 6 nights accommodation - BB/HB
- 2 nights in Hotel*** in Palinuro – 1 HB + 1 BB
- 2 nights in Hotel*** in Marina di Camerota - BB
- 2 nights in Hotel*** in San Giovanni a Piro - HB
- Extensive route notes, with description of the route & tourist information
- Maps at 1 : 25.000 scale
- GPS tracks for each walk
- Luggage transfer
- Private transfers as specified
- 24/7 h assistance

NOT INCLUDED

- Visas & Departure taxes
- Travel Insurance
- Tourist taxes
- 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. 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 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; elsewhere you have to follow the route descriptions provided together with the maps. With these you will always be able to find your route.



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ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

Arrival: The tour starts in PALINURO; a pick-up service is included from the Palinuro/Pisciotta train station, which can easily be reached from Naples, the nearest city with an international airport.

Departure: The tour ends in SAN GIOVANNI A PIRO. A short transfer brings you to the train station (included), from where you travel on to your next destination (Naples, Salerno or Rome can all be easily reached). Several taxi services are available to bring you directly to your next destination.



TOUR VARIATIONS

This tour shows you the best part of the southern Cilento Coast – those paths which are actually accessible on foot. We also offer tours along the northern Cilento Coast, as well as a 'complete' tour, which includes great walks both along the northern coast as well as a few walks along the South coast. Check these out:

- [Paestum & the Coast of Monte Stella](#) – northern Cilento, with Paestum, beautiful Castellabate and Acciaroli.
- [Paestum & the pristine coast of the Cilento National Park](#) – the best walks along the Cilento Coast

EXTRA NIGHTS

It is possible to include extra nights in any of the towns en-route. Extra walking or sightseeing options can be provided as indicated in the day-to-day programme.

EXTENSIONS

It is possible to extend the tour with one or more nights in Scario or any other town along the coast. A nice – contrasting – extension to your trip can also be a city tour in either [Salerno](#) or [Naples](#). This tour can also be



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extended with one of our existing tours in the heart of the Cilento. Several stays in a beautiful **agriturismo** – with walking and cycling options - can be organized. We strongly suggest a few days in what is perhaps the most authentic part of the Cilento, the area of Morigerati and the 'Capelli di Venere' Waterfalls.

Optional extension SCARIO

If you want some more relax at the end of the trip you can extend your tour with one or more nights in the charming seaside village of Scario. From here you can explore by boat the beautiful beaches of the Infreschi / Masseta Coast, among the most unspoilt in southern Italy, a real treat out of season. It is possible to make a stunning walk to one of the beaches, have a great lunch there, and then be picked up by boat and brought to Scario.

Accommodation: Scario - Hotel * /******

Optional extension MORIGERATI & 'CAPELLI DI VENERE' WATERFALLS

Day 7 – Into the wild valley of Morigerati

A private transfer brings you inland today, into the heart of the genuine authentic Cilento, featuring a spectacular pristine landscape and villages where time seems to have stood still. The landscape is of a wild karstic nature, with grotto's, sinkholes, where complete rivers disappear, and beautiful mountain springs. You are brought to the mountain hamlet of Caselle in Pittari. Here you pick up your picnic supplies before embarking on a beautiful walk along the slopes of the Monte San Michele, featuring one of the great chapels of St. Michael. The first part of the walk goes up gently along a well maintained mule track. Views open up and are stunning to say the least!. After a short visit to the chapel you continue down into the wild valley of Morigerati. It's here that the river Bussento comes to the light again, after having flown underground for several kilometres. The area of its reappearance, which features also a number of ancient watermills is a fairytale like landscape, and now an important WWF Nature Reserve. Take your time to visit the grotto's, the mills and perhaps put your feet in the water, before descending along the river to your beautifully located agriturismo. Here you'll have a great meal tonight, based on local organic produce.

Accommodation: Morigerati - Agriturismo* – HB**

Day 8 – Round walk Morigerati

Today will be a day full of surprises, walking through an unreal landscape of breathtaking rocky canyons with freshwater pools, streams and sparkling waterfalls. After buying some picnic supplies in the charming village of Morigerati you head east, towards the villages of Tortorella and Casaleto Spartano. You'll come across the ruins of centuries old 'industrial heritage', you'll walk through one of the deepest canyons in southern Italy and you'll touch some of the most authentic villages. One of the highlights of the walk will be the stroll along the river at Casaleto where you'll encounter the Cascata Capelli di Venere, a waterfall named the "Hair of Venus", made up of delicate cascades. This is a truly spectacular spot to swim, so plunge in and cool down under the fast-flowing rivulets of the small waterfall, which flows over a cave covered with moss. Take your time as well to stroll through the charming villages and perhaps have a drink with the locals in a small café. Here tourism has not yet compromised the natural interest in 'foreigners' and locals will be happy to see you around. Tonight you can opt to have dinner at your agriturismo again, or you can opt to go and eat in one of the most renowned 'trattorie' of the area, offering great genuine food – and if you wish some good pizza too !

Accommodation: Morigerati - Agriturismo* – BB**

Day 9 – Departure

After breakfast you are brought to the train station. From here you return by train to Naples (centre or airport), Salerno or Rome.

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