

ITALY – WALKING THE AMALFI COAST

8-day / 7-night **SELF-GUIDED** walking holiday Amalfi to Positano & optional 3-day Sorrento extension



This is a spectacular walking holiday in the Mezzogiorno – ‘the land of the midday sun’ – on Italy’s stunning Amalfi Coast. Here the mountains, maquis pasture, lemon groves, vineyards and villages meet a rugged coastline. You can stroll on a stony trail one moment and next moment wind down a grassy path through citrus groves to a pleasant village overlooking the blue waters of the Mediterranean, gelato in hand. This is a deeply romantic place with picturesque churches and traditional villages. Cliffs glow in the golden light and the waters below graduate into an aquamarine haze. Then there are the greens of the cliff tops, speckled with spring flowers and herbs. The towns, villages and villas too are a riotous mix of vibrant colours and tempered pastel shades.

There is so much history. The Greeks settled here in the 8th Century BC. The Romans came next, building villas at Positano and on Capri. The eruption of Mount Vesuvius caused much destruction at Pompeii and Herculaneum and along the Amalfi Coast. In the medieval period Amalfi became a major maritime city-state with a thriving sea trade. Today the town remains much as it was with narrow lanes and St Andrew’s Cathedral dominating the centre. The old ship yards have been replaced now by a marina and sea defences.

Our walks through this spectacular region use the extensive network of footpaths and mule tracks along the cliffs, reaching a wealth of natural and cultural treasures. We pass near beautiful monasteries, caves and ancient farmhouses, visit nature reserves and the ruins of paper mills, with spectacular views each day on all the walks. Visit historic Amalfi, Atrani, Ravello and Positano; extend your stay with walks on the “Finis Terrae” on the Sorrentine Peninsula, the marine nature reserve of Punta Campanella, and on the famous Isle of Capri.

Departs: Daily from Amalfi to Positano on demand from March to October.

Cost 8-days: Seasonal from **\$1945 to \$2395** per person twin share. Single room supplement on request.

Cost 11-days: Seasonal from **\$2420 to \$2980** per person twin share. Single room supplement on request.

Includes: 7 nights’ or 10 nights’ comfortable accommodation in 3 - 4-star hotels with ensuite facilities with breakfast each day, route notes and maps (one set per room), luggage transfers, emergency hotline

Not included: Lunches and meals not mentioned, drinks or transfers, travel from Positano to Sorrento, optional sightseeing, personal items, city hotel taxes (approx. €2-4 per person per day, paid directly to the hotel).

Grading: **Moderate** - Day 4 is challenging, and one of the Sorrento options is rockier than any of the other walks. This tour is suitable for those who have had some experience of walking and are in good general physical condition. There are lots of ascents and descents on stepped trails, so this is not a good walk if you have issues with your knees. Please note you can expect to walk in hotter temperatures in late June, July, August and September which can make the walks more challenging.

Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details & reservations

Suggested AMALFI TO POSITANO 8-day itinerary:

Day 1: Arrive in Amalfi

Arrive mid-afternoon allowing time for a short visit to the town centre and maybe a swim to wash off the fatigue of the journey. Visit St Andrew's Cathedral, which claims to also be the eponymous saint's resting place, and the interesting Arabesque cloister. You could also visit the paper museum where there are still 14th Century water driven presses and hammers that produce parchment paper from cloth fragments.

Day 2: Valle dei Mulini circular walk

walking @ 11km

Walk first into the *Valle dei Mulini*, the valley of watermills, dotted with ruins of Europe's oldest paper factories, dating back to the 11th Century. Climb to the little village of Pontone for an optional walk to the Torre dello Zirro, a marvellous picnic area with spectacular views of Amalfi to one side and Atrani to the other. From here it's about an hour's walk to Ravello, another highlight of the Amalfi Coast, with its beautiful Romanesque church and two sets of gardens, both with views from their terraces that have been described as the most beautiful in the world. We leave it up to you to decide. Then descend steeply to Amalfi, passing through Atrani, with the chance to look around the town's narrow white streets. The last stretch has beautiful views of Amalfi's centre.

Day 3: Valle delle Ferriere circular walk

walking @ 10km

Short transfer by bus (paid locally) or a steep walk to Scala. Walk into the Valle delle Ferriere, one of southern Italy's most beautiful nature reserves. Spectacular scenery as you walk below towering cliffs and pass close to little waterfalls. The path then gradually descends through the forest towards the little village of Pogerola. There is a nice bar here with a balcony overlooking Pontone and Ravello, a lovely spot for refreshments. From here a reasonably graded medieval stepped mule track curves down to Amalfi, amidst lemon groves and maquis.

Day 4: Maestra dei Villaggi & Praiano

walking @ 15km or 18km

A strenuous day with little shade, but you could shorten it by taking the bus at the lunch spot at around half way. From Amalfi, walk along one of the oldest streets of the area, the *Maestra dei Villaggi*, or highway of the villages, an old paved mule track dating back to the 9th Century. Pass through small villages before arriving at the imposing monastery of Santa Rosa, now a hotel. Descend to the coast again, passing some charming churches located above the rocky shore, then descend steeply to the spectacular fjord of Furore, an ideal spot for lunch. Luigi runs a tiny restaurant down here and will prepare his catch of the day should you want a sit down meal. This is also the place where you could take the bus to your hotel.

From Furore there is a steep stepped ascent above this natural inlet. From here walk past the church of Sant'Elia into the Valley of Praia. The path threads its way into the wild terraces, uncultivated for decades and there is some walking close to cliffs. After passing a house once occupied by a locally known wizard, drop into the coastal town Praiano, perhaps descending to picturesque Marina di Praia, the tiny old harbour of Praiano. Praiano is spread out over about 3km with upper and lower parts.

Day 5: Valley of Praia circular walk

walking @ 11km

Walk through the streets of Praiano uphill towards the little church of San Luca, the old heart of Praiano. From here, walk on an easy path above the village into the Valley of Praia, a beautiful green valley with many vineyards clinging to the cliffs. You then ascend to the caves of Santa Barbara; another short section uphill allowing for a visit to the village of Bomerano, a less touristed place, for a coffee. Returning a little way brings you to the beginning of the famous *Sentiero degli Dei* (Footpath of the Gods), a walk with unrivalled views. After a very panoramic stretch with views as far as the island of Capri, you start the descent to Praiano, passing over centuries-old steps, and one can just marvel about those who constructed these perhaps hundreds of years ago.

Day 6: Praiano to Positano

walking @ 11km

Walk along an old pilgrims' path twisting uphill to the monastery of San Domenico on a hillside terrace. Rest here before continuing uphill through spectacular scenery with bizarre rock formations and lush vegetation. Then follow the last stretch of the Footpath of Gods, which really lives up to its name, to the hamlet of Nocelle. On the way there are some high cliff-side trails with views to Praiano and on to Positano and Capri. You arrive in the little village of Montepertuso and there is a choice of stairways descending to charming Positano.

Day 7: Positano circular walk

walking @ 8km

Take the local bus up to Montepertuso for a walk above the valley of Positano. Follow ancient footpaths through forest and along cliff tops with great views. Climb towards Santa Maria al Castello, the old fortress defending the narrow valley between the Amalfi and Sorrentine side of the peninsula. On the way up there is a section of steps known as the 'Tse-Tse', offering expansive views of both the Gulf of Salerno and the Gulf of Naples. Through a park-like landscape take an easy trail to the *Caserna Forestale*, a foresters' house, then through forest zig-zag down to Montepertuso. Along another medieval mule track descend to Positano.

Day 8: Trip ends after breakfast

You can arrange to return to Naples by ferry, bus and train, or taxi for onward flight connections (at extra cost).

SORRENTO EXTENSION – Days 8 to 11:

Day 8: Positano – Sorrento

Make your way to Sorrento by public bus (€3.60 per person), ferry (€15) or taxi (approx. €60 for up to four people). Baggage transfer is included between Positano and Sorrento for those on the 11-day tour. From Sorrento we suggest you take the local train to explore the ruins of Pompeii without your luggage in tow. This is the world's most intriguing Roman excavation so allow at least half a day. In the afternoon take some time as well to visit the historical town centre of the 'new' village of Pompeii, with its famous cathedral, which is one of southern Italy's most important pilgrimage destinations, before returning to Sorrento, to stroll through its charming little streets with fabulous views of the Bay of Naples. Or, take a shorter seaside walk from Sorrento to the Roman villa of Pollio, located above a small natural inlet with views over the Bay of Naples. The villa has a natural spring known as the baths of Queen Margherita, great for a swim. Walk or return by bus to Sorrento.

Optional walk up to 7km return from Sorrento

Day 9: Termini or Ieranto Peninsula circuit

Take the local bus from Sorrento to Termini, the last village of the peninsula, and walk up to the chapel of San Costanzo for expansive views. Take a beautiful but rough and rocky path running along the impressive cliffs of the 'Finis Terrae', the end of the Amalfi Peninsula, descending through disused terraces and with views of Capri and to the neighbouring Ieranto Peninsula. Arrive at Punta Campanella headland with its old 'Martello' type stone watch tower built 1334, restored 1567, called the Minerva Tower as there was once a temple here dedicated to Minerva. From the village of Nerano you may like to continue your walk to the Bay of Ieranto, ('Baia di Ieranto') one of the most beautiful and unspoilt bays of the area. A Natural Marine Reserve, the area is owned by a private trust but access is free. Perhaps have a swim here before returning to Sorrento by bus.

walking up to 11km

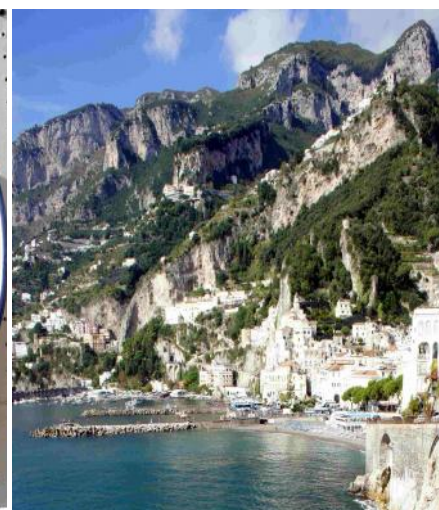
Day 10: Capri

Take the boat to Capri, an island famous since Roman times for its beautiful location and healthy climate. There is a wonderful circular walk around part of the island (with a few steps involved) to some famous spots such as the Piazzetta, where you can rub shoulders with the rich and famous. There are views of the three sea stacks known as the Faraglioni and across the narrow streets of the Capri village centre. Walk to 'Villa Clovis', the villa of the Emperor Tiberius, and for a small entry fee wander through fairly well-preserved Roman remains. From here walk to a great natural arch overlooking the sea and then down to some grottos. Returning to Capri town visit the Monastery of San Giacomo and the Augustus Gardens with time to relax or do some shopping, or take lunch on the other side of the island at Marina Piccola, before heading to Capri harbour at Marina Grande for the return ferry to Sorrento. Feel the charm of the island, without getting trapped in the mass tourism of Capri town.

walking @ 10km

Day 11: Trip ends after breakfast

You can arrange to return to Naples by ferry, bus and train, or taxi for onward flight connections (at extra cost).



Other walking holidays from **Outdoor Travel** – guided in small groups or self-guided with inn-to-inn luggage transfers and meals – are available in many parts of Europe including in France the **Dordogne**, the **Vermillion Coast**, **Burgundy**, the **Loire Valley**, the **Cevennes**, and **Provence**; in Italy **Tuscany**, the **Dolomites**, **Cinque Terre** or in **Umbria**; and many more. For long distance routes we offer the **Way of St James**, the **Camino de Santiago**, from Le Puy in France to Santiago in Spain, or the **Via Francigena**, the pilgrims' *Road to Rome*.

Contact Outdoor Travel for more details and reservations:

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