

**VITORITALY**<sup>®</sup>  
Italy with Italians

## AUTHENTIC SOUTHERN ITALY GRAND TOUR

Amalfi, Matera, Puglia & Naples in 12 days

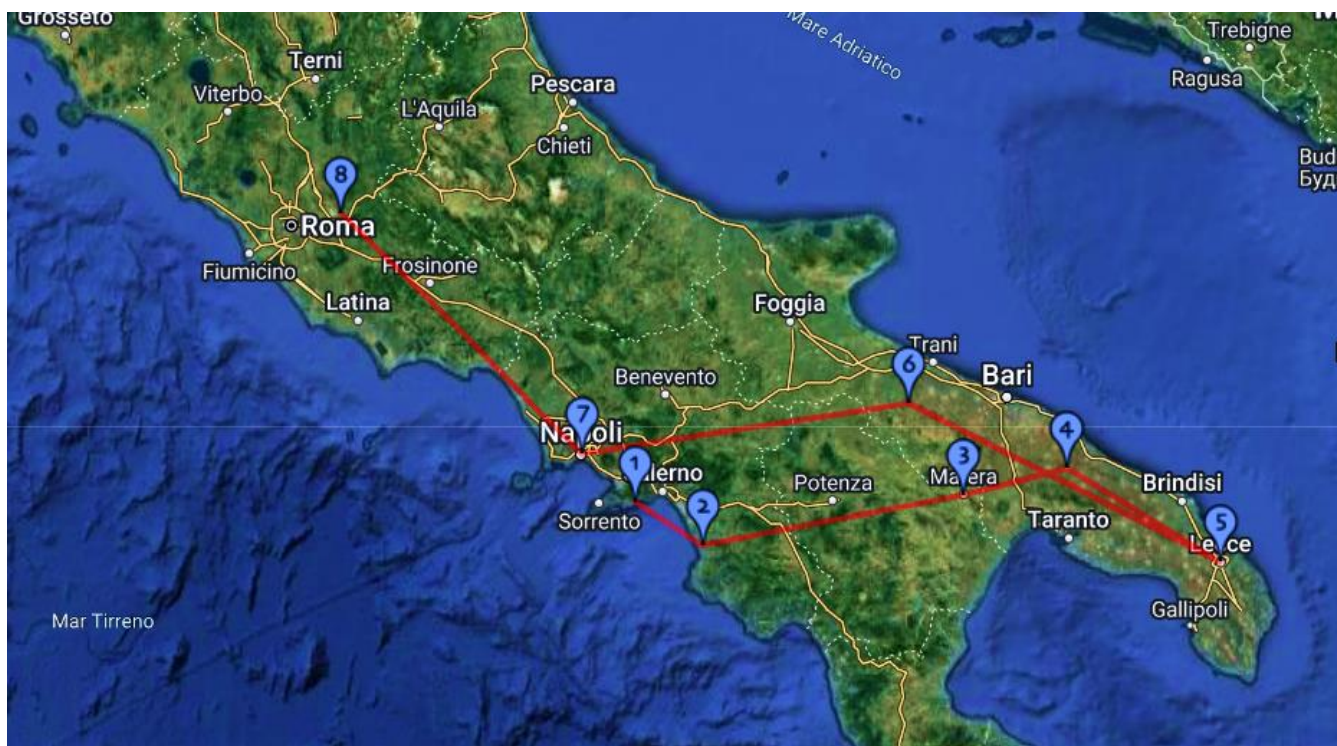
### DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY





From Rome to the coast of Amalfi, magically suspended between the sky and the sea, and Matera and its unique sets. Then Puglia, on the footprints of an endless procession of conquerors and cultures, stamped in stone, gold and marble. Seas of olives, olive-green seas and food the equal to any in Italy. And finally, lively Naples and Tivoli, the country resort of Emperors and Cardinals!

Around Southern Italy at the discovery of the culture and spirit of the country.



## TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

- The Amalfi Coast, where divas were at home
- Capri, a love story with sea and sky
- Paestum, when Greeks ruled Italy
- Matera, the city of stone
- Alberobello, living in Trulliland
- Lecce, the "Florence" of Southern Italy
- Castel del Monte, the fortress of mystery
- Naples, pizza time
- Pompeii, a Roman city fixed in lava
- Tivoli, an invitation from the Emperor

## ITINERARY SUMMARY

DAY	ACTIVITIES INCLUDED IN THE PROGRAM
Day 1 <b>Castelli Romani</b>	- Transfer to your accommodation on the Amalfi Coast - Stopover in Castelli Romani area - Visit of a Frascati Wine Cellar with tasting <i>Overnight on the Amalfi Coast</i>
Day 2 <b>Amalfi Coast</b>	- Full-day excursion of the Amalfi Coast: Amalfi, Positano, Ravello - Visit of a "Colatura di alici" laboratory in Cetara <i>Overnight on the Amalfi Coast</i>
Day 3 <b>Amalfi Coast</b>	- Full-day hiking tour along the "Path of the Gods" above Positano with an <u>Authorised Tourist Guide</u> OR Half-day excursion to Sorrento <i>Overnight on the Amalfi Coast</i>
Day 4 <b>Capri</b>	- Round trip from your accommodation to Amalfi/Positano/Sorrento Harbour - Round trip by public ferry to Capri Harbour - Full-day excursion to Capri Island with an <u>Authorised Tourist Guide</u> with public transportation on the island - Admissions to Augustus Gardens and Villa San Michele - Funicular Tickets <i>Overnight on the Amalfi Coast</i>
Day 5 <b>Paestum</b>	- Transfer to your accommodation in Matera – Stopover in Paestum - 1.5-hour private walking tour of Paestum Archeological Area with an <u>Authorised Tourist Guide</u> - Lunch at Buffalo Mozzarella Farm with tastings <i>Overnight in Matera city centre</i>
Day 6 <b>Matera</b>	- 3-hour private walking tour of Matera city centre with an <u>Authorised Tourist Guide</u> - Admission to the Church and Cave House in Matera - 2- hour Materan Cooking Class <i>Overnight in Matera city centre</i>
Day 7 <b>Alberobello</b>	- Transfer to your accommodation in Ostuni area – Stopover in Alberobello - Visit of a local wine cellar with tastings <i>Overnight in Ostuni area</i>
Day 8 <b>Lecce</b>	- Full-day excursion to Lecce - 3-hour private walking tour of Lecce city centre with an <u>Authorised Tourist Guide</u> - 2-hour Ceramics Class in Grottaglie <i>Overnight in Ostuni area</i>
Day 9 <b>Martina Franca &amp; Locorotondo</b>	- Full-day excursion to Martina Franca and Locorotondo - Visit of an olive oil mill with tastings <i>Overnight in Ostuni area</i>
Day 10 <b>Castel del Monte</b>	- Transfer to your accommodation in Naples – Stopover in Castel del Monte - 1-hour private walking tour of Castel del Monte with an <u>Authorised Tourist Guide</u> <i>Overnight in Naples city centre</i>
Day 11 <b>Naples</b>	- 3-hour private walking tour of Naples city centre with an <u>Authorised Tourist Guide</u> - Admission to Cappella Sansevero - Half-day excursion to Pompei - 2-hour private walking tour of Pompei Archeological Area with an <u>Authorised Tourist Guide</u> <i>Overnight in Naples city centre</i>
Day 12 <b>Tivoli</b>	- Full-day excursion to Tivoli with an <u>Authorised Tourist Guide</u> - Admission to Hadrian's Villa and Villa d'Este - Drop off at your accommodation in Rome <i>Overnight in Rome city centre</i>

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

- **Accommodations in Double Room with Continental Breakfast (\*):**
  - Days 1 to 4: 3\* to 5\* Hotel on the Amalfi Coast
  - Days 5 & 6: 3\* to 5\* Hotel in Matera city centre
  - Days 7 to 9: 3\* to 5\* Hotel in Ostuni area
  - Days 10 & 11: 3\* to 5\* Hotel in Naples city centre
  - Day 12: 3\* to 5\* Hotel in Rome city centre

(\*) The Hotel list is available upon request

- **Transfers (\*\*):**
  - Day 1: Transfer to your accommodation on the Amalfi Coast - Stopover in Castelli Romani area
  - Day 4: Round trip from your accommodation to Amalfi/Positano/Sorrento Harbour – Round trip by public ferry to Capri Harbour - Transfer by public ferry to Amalfi/Positano/Sorrento Harbour - Transfer to your accommodation on the Amalfi Coast
  - Day 5: Transfer to your accommodation in Matera– Stopover in Paestum
  - Day 7: Transfer to your accommodation in Ostuni area – Stopover in Alberobello
  - Day 10: Transfer to your accommodation in Naples - Stopover in Castel del Monte
- (\*\*) All transfers by private Sedan (2 pax) / Minivan (3 to 6 pax) / Minibus (7 to 10 pax)
- **Private Guided Visits / Tours / Activities(\*\*):**
  - Day 1: Visit of a Frascati Wine Cellar with tasting
  - Day 2: Full-day excursion of the Amalfi Coast: Amalfi, Positano, Ravello - Visit of a “Colatura di alici” laboratory in Cetara
  - Day 3: Full-day hiking tour along the “Path of the Gods” above Positano with an Authorised Tourist Guide **OR** Half-day excursion to Sorrento
  - Day 4: Full-day excursion to Capri Island with an Authorised Tourist Guide with public transportation on the island - Ticket Funicular
  - Day 5: 1.5-hour private walking tour of Paestum Archeological Area with an Authorised Archeological Tourist Guide - Lunch at Buffalo Mozzarella Farm with tastings
  - Day 6: 3-hour private walking tour of Matera city centre with an Authorised Tourist Guide - 2-hour Materan Cooking Class
  - Day 7: Visit of a local wine cellar with tastings in Alberobello area
  - Day 8: Full-day excursion to Lecce - 3-hour private walking tour of Lecce city centre with an Authorised Tourist Guide - 2-hour Ceramics Class in Grottaglie
  - Day 9: Full-day excursion to Martinafranca and Locorotondo - Visit of an olive oil mill with tastings
  - Day 10: 1-hour private visit of Castel del Monte with an Authorised Tourist Guide
  - Day 11: 3-hour private walking tour of Naples city centre with an Authorised Tourist Guide - 2-hour private walking tour of Pompei Archeological Area with an Authorised Archeological Tourist Guide
  - Day 12: Full-day excursion to Tivoli with an Authorised Tourist Guide
- (\*\*\*) All tours by private Sedan (2 pax) / Minivan (3 to 6 pax) / Minibus (7 to 10 pax)
- **Admission Tickets to:**
  - Paestum Archeological Area
  - Augustus Gardens and Villa San Michele in Capri
  - Castel del Monte in Andria
  - Church and Cave House in Matera
  - Pompei Archeological Area
  - Cappella Sansevero in Naples
  - Hadrian’s Villa and Villa d’Este in Tivoli
- **Full emergency assistance 24 hours/day by our Back Office**
- **List of recommended restaurants and deli shops along the itinerary**
- **All taxes**

## NOT INCLUDED IN THE PRICE

- All transfers and other services not specifically mentioned in the above program
- Meals, wine and beverages
- Porterage fees at every accommodation
- Camera or Video fees
- Tipping for local guides and drivers
- Laundry, telephone calls and other expenditures of personal nature
- Travel / Vacation insurance

## OPTIONS

- Pick-up in Rome FCO Airport / Rome Railway Station
- Accommodation in Rome on the night before the beginning of the tour
- Drop off in Rome FCO Airport (Rome Railway Station)
- Other options upon request

## TOUR MAIN FEATURES

### CASTELLI ROMANI

Benvenuti in Italia, welcome to Castelli Romani!

The area south of Rome is known as “Castelli Romani” (Roman Castles). The entire area originated from a series of volcanic eruptions that shook an original crater, creating some lakes. The area, a traditional destination for the out-of-



town excursions of the Romans, is dotted with several pretty hill towns famous for their ancient history and highly regarded wine: **Castelgandolfo**, the summer residence of the pope, **Rocca di Papa** and **Grottaferrata**, known for their culture and gastronomic delicacies, Frascati, famous for its breathtaking views and its sweet and refreshing white wine named after the city, are only some of them.



## THE AMALFI COAST

Costiera Amalfitana is Italy's most scenic stretch of coastline, a landscape of pastel-coloured villages terraced into hillsides, steep panoramic roads, luxuriant gardens and enchanting vistas over turquoise waters and green mountains. Considered by UNESCO "an outstanding example of a Mediterranean landscape, with exceptional cultural and natural scenic values," the coast has been a World Heritage Site since 1997. You may go from town to town at the discovery of Amalfi, Positano, and Ravello, three of the most beautiful villages in Southern Italy, world-famous for their charm and colourful architecture.

**Amalfi** typically has Mediterranean architecture with lanes and characteristic white houses piled one upon the other. In the Middle Ages, it was one of Italy's four powerful maritime republics (with Venice, Pisa, and Genoa). All sea trade in the Mediterranean was once governed by the 12<sup>th</sup> century "Tavole Amalfitane", one of the world's oldest maritime codes. A must-see in Amalfi is the **Duomo di Sant'Andrea**, fronted by an intricately patterned façade, redone in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Founded in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, the Cathedral's subsequent alterations have spared its principal glory, the main portal's 11<sup>th</sup>-century



Byzantine bronze doors. Next to the church lies the **Chiostro del Paradiso** (1268), or Cloister of Paradise, whose serious Romanesque tone is animated by the Arab elements in its sinuous columns. To escape the bustle of Amalfi, let's take the famous walk along the "**Valle dei Mulini**", a steep-sided valley dotted with ruined watermills – "i mulini" - once used to make paper, an industry for which Amalfi was, and still is, famous.

**Positano** sits in a splendid panoramic position on one of the most beautiful stretches of coastline. Its enchanting town centre of delightful pastel-coloured houses surrounds the parish **church of Santa Maria Assunta**; its streets are lined with quaint, colourful shops, and its numerous beaches are world-famous.

**Ravello** is more elevated than the other pearls of the Amalfi Coast, boasting exceptional views of the coast and its marvellous villas and gardens. French novelist André Gide said they are "closer to the sky than the sea". Here, you may visit **Villa Rufolo**, built in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, which hosted popes and kings, and Richard Wagner, who composed part of his opera Parsifal here in 1880. Views from its idyllic gardens are magnificent!

A trip to **Cetara** is an absolute must. The village is renowned for a particular gourmet speciality, "*colatura di acciughe*" (anchovy sauce), produced according to an ancient procedure for generations. Spaghetti with colatura di alici is the area's typical recipe, a dish you will remember forever. Discover the secrets of the liquid gold of the Coast in the [article](#) in our BLOG.

If you are in the mood for hiking, the "**Path of the Gods**" climbs the mountain above Positano, which offers absolutely stunning views over the coast and Capri. Above Praiano, you may also engage in a unique guided **Gastronomic Trek**, picking natural herbs you will use in a most unusual cooking class led by your guide/cook.

At dinner, don't miss *Spaghetti with clams in olive oil and garlic sauce* or *Seafood Risotto* with a glass of excellent *Greco di Tufo* white wine.

## SORRENTO

An expanse of land that juts out towards Capri and the rest of the Mediterranean, the Sorrentine Coast lies just south of the Bay of Naples. It is a sequence of cliffs and overhangs dominating the sea - with a few small bays along the way -



blessed with a view of the enchanting deep blue; sloping terraces cultivated with oranges, vines, olives and, most of all, lemons, come down to the sea. Tourists lucky enough to pass through in springtime will be pleasantly overwhelmed with their perfume, while visitors year-round can enjoy the divine consequences of the sour citrus once picked: after all, life gave this Coast lemon, and the people made Limoncello!

Man has been spellbound by this spot from the beginning, initiating with the ancient Greeks - they thought that these waters were the home of

sirens (legend has it that in Antiquity, Surrentum, as it was known, came about as a site of cult worship dedicated to this mythological mer-people). Later, the Romans built their splendid villas, roads, ports and thermal spas; certain remnants are still visible here. Inhabited during the Middle Ages, and despite eventual incursions by the Saracens, the Sorrentine and Amalfi Coasts were prime stops for those 18<sup>th</sup>-century European men of means on their traditional Grand Tour.

## CAPRI

With a steep, jagged coast and encircled by the famous "**Faraglioni**" (sea stacks), enormous and uniquely shaped boulders, and by numerous caves that tell of evocative plays of light, Capri offers a landscape of wild beauty sculpted by wind, sea and the hand of man. The most famous of these caves is the "**Grotta Azzurra**" (Blue Grotto), closely connected to the history of tourism in Capri.

Its discovery by the ancient Romans is hinted at by countless archaeological finds - e.g. **Villa Jovis**, whose construction was commissioned by Emperor Tiberius.

The island continues to be both a legend and a favourite destination for travellers, intellectuals and the international jet-set - "performing" at any given time in the legendary "**Piazzetta**", the real-time theatre of the island's 'Dolce Vita'. Beyond sea and nature in all their charm, Capri offers many chances for excellent shopping: elegant boutiques and artisans' studios



selling "Made in Italy" items and typical products alternate along the characteristic sidestreets and alleyways. Moreover, the flavoured local food is tied to the island's maritime and peasant traditions.

The island is associated with the myth of the Sirens due to the presence of the homonymous rock of the Sirens, characterizing the bay of **Marina Piccola**. Servius's commentary on the 5th song of Virgil's Aeneid is among the sources that feed the legend. The poet narrates half-bird and half-woman creatures that would have lived in Capreae and who, with their songs, bewitched the sailors and sent them against the rocks. On the other hand, the physical conformation of the island, which is made of coves, caves, and precipices, makes it perfect as a refuge for these mythological beings.

## PAESTUM

Located in the southeast of the Gulf of Salerno, Paestum is an archaeological site of extreme importance, recognised by UNESCO as part of the World Cultural Heritage. Built by the Greeks around the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC with the name of Poseidon, the city was later occupied by Romans, who made it a thriving colony, giving it its current name.

In addition to its cultural value, the importance of Paestum is linked to the excellent conservation of properties, starting from its walls, which the Greeks built and later strengthened by the Romans. Inside them, three majestic temples on a green plain reflect a different light depending on the hours and seasons. Many writers, poets and artists like Goethe, Shelley, Canova and Piranesi were fascinated by this sight, which later inspired them for their works.



These large buildings are a remarkable example of Doric-style architecture. **The Temple of Hera**, dating to the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, is the most ancient building. The **Temple of Neptune** (5<sup>th</sup> century BC) is a massive construction made of travertine marble in a warm golden colour that varies at different times of the day. **The Temple of Ceres** (6<sup>th</sup> century BC), dedicated to the goddess Athena, was transformed into a church back in medieval times.

Besides its temples, Paestum is famous also for a gourmet speciality that you should taste on

site: its “mozzarella di bufala”. Made with the best buffalo milk from the area, *“mozzarella di bufala”* is closely linked to the land of Campania; the skill it is made reflects the love the cheesemakers put into creating this Italian excellence. We will visit a cheese factory in the area to understand how it is created and taste it freshly made, an unforgettable experience!



## MATERA

Matera is one of the oldest cities in the world, whose territory holds evidence of human settlements from the Paleolithic and has been without interruption until today. Touring Matera is like experiencing a forgotten past - you feel like setting foot in a nativity scene when you visit this charming city in Lucania. It's no coincidence it's referred to as "the second Bethlehem" and was the setting for Mel Gibson's movie "The Passion" and the last James Bond, "No time to die".

Matera is widely known as the city of the "**Sassi**", the original urban nucleus, developed from the natural caves carved into the rock and subsequently modelled in increasingly complex structures.

In the 1950s, when the inhabitants who lived in the caves dug out of the mountain were forced to abandon those dwellings to settle in modern districts, no one would have ever thought that those grottos - the Sassi - would have become the symbol of a reborn city. UNESCO added the Sassi of Matera to its list of World Heritage Sites in 1993 as a whole and a millennial way of life to be preserved and handed down to our descendants. In fact, it was recognized as a model for living harmoniously with the environment while integrating with it and taking advantage of resources without disturbing the environment.

Geologists call it calcarenite, and ordinary folk refer to it as "tuff": it's the rock surrounding Matera that this land's master artisans learned to work with in ancient times. This brittle, adaptable material is abundant in the mountain that dominates the city, so it seemed only natural for the people from Matera to go up there and dig out that rock to build a home. The extracted material was processed to make the façade of the dwelling. After the first home, others were constructed until the network of houses, tunnels, and alleyways became that magical place called Sassi - a gigantic sculpture, a miracle of town planning!



In Matera, you'll discover one of the most beloved Italian breads. "Pane di Matera" is a bakery product for which only hard wheat semolina and sourdough are used. The characteristics to recognize the bread of Matera are the shapes, croissant or high bread, and a straw-yellow crumb. But besides bread, you'll not miss other local specialities such as the Caciocavallo cheese or the "Lucanica" sausage.

## ALBEROBELLO & MARTINA FRANCA

The **Trulli** are famous worldwide for their beauty and unique characteristics and represent one of the most extraordinary examples of Italian folk architecture. They were built in a particular historical period when the construction of stable dwellings was highly taxed; the region's inhabitants thus boasted a great capacity to adapt and an exceptional cleverness in coming up with the Trulli, temporary houses built with the local stone. From precariousness to stability - the process of transformation and recovery and the deference to the originality of the work

earned the Trulli of Alberobello their recognition as a World Heritage Site.



In Alberobello, the capital of the Trulli, each Trullo has a different shape and size. Unique constructions are sometimes combined in a complex of communicating houses, while others are built on two levels. Most feature a grey cone-shaped roof, ending with a sphere or hemisphere shape. The interior, arranged as a single chamber, comprises niches for a fireplace, bed and furniture. The structure assures excellent indoor climate control: cool in summer and warm in winter!

**Martina Franca** is a charming baroque town 400 metres above sea level. The era of greatest splendour for this city was undoubtedly the 18th century when the most important monuments and

churches still dominating the historic centre were built. Baroque is the predominant style; it can be seen in many buildings, and in this city, it has taken on characteristic connotations that distinguish it from the other variations of this artistic and architectural current; in fact, we speak of "Martinese" Baroque.

After visiting Martina Franca, we'll taste its most famous product, olive oil, at a typical Masseria.



## LECCE

Lying on a plain at the foot of the Salento Plateau is Lecce - the "**Florence of the South**" - one of the most exciting cities in the region for its architecture, typical of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

Of ancient origins, the city experienced two distinct periods of prosperity: the Roman era and the Kingdom of Naples. Under both, the construction of buildings, monuments, and mansions increased significantly. These new structures were characterized by magnificent and rich ornamentations that earned this typical architecture the definition of "Leccese Baroque". The imaginative and meticulous sculpting work was facilitated by the fact that the local stone is flexible and easy to inlay. A visit to Lecce can begin with **Piazza Duomo**, once used as a fortress and today considered the most elegant "salon" in the city. The grandeur of the Duomo, the work of Zimbalo, Cino and Penna, the five-story-tall bell tower, the Palazzo Vescovile (Bishop's Palace), and the Palazzo del Seminario (Seminary) mark the perimeter of the square, one of the monumental works that best represent the magnificence of Lecce's style.



Not far away, Piazza Sant'Oronzo narrates the city's entire history. The Roman period is visible in the ruins of the Amphitheatre that becomes the exceptional stage for theatrical performances in the summertime, and in part by the high Column - on which stands a bronze of St. Orontius, depicted in the act of blessing - erected in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century utilizing some of the Roman columns positioned on the Ancient Appian Way. **Palazzo del Seggio**, known as the "Seat," hosting important art exhibitions, and the Church of Santa Maria delle Grazie, with its interesting frescoes and works sculpted in wood, symbolise the Apulian Renaissance.

Not to be missed is a visit to the Basilica di Santa Croce, where the inspiration of master masonry is visible in every part of the monumental façade that anticipates the beauty of its interior, a harmonious balance between the sobriety of the classical style and the splendour of Lecce's Baroque.

## CASTEL DEL MONTE

Recognized as a World Heritage Site in 1996, Castel del Monte is a brilliant example of medieval architecture located on a hill in the Murge area. Commissioned by the eclectic and cultured Frederick II, Duke of Swabia, Emperor of the Sacred Roman Empire, the Castle is an exceptional work for the perfection of its forms and the fusion of cultural elements from different periods and places. The Lions at the monumental entrance are typical of Romanesque art, while the friezes that decorate some parts of the castle belie Classical inspiration. And the floor's design and materials are partly reminiscent of Islamic art.



The number 8 is the principal factor in the castle's plan: 8 sides of the castle, 8 rooms on the ground floor and first floor, arranged to form an octagon, and 8 the massive octagonal towers.

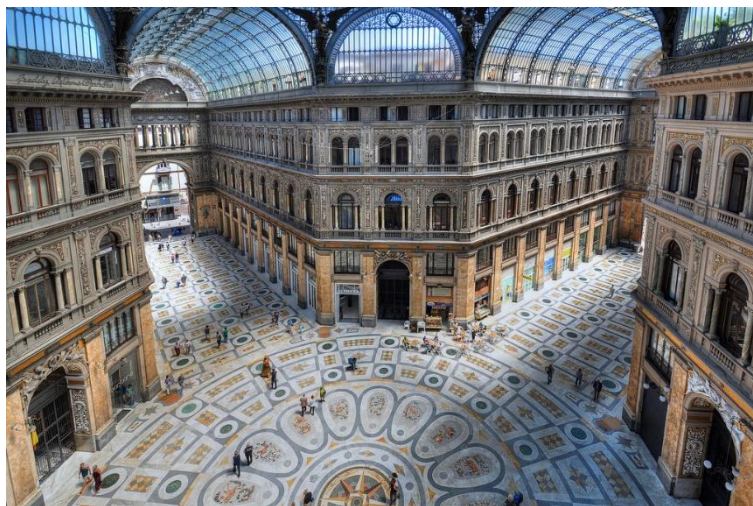
It is still unclear what led Frederick II to build this brilliant piece of architecture. An air of mystery surrounds it and is thus the fount of many legends and the charm of this unique place.



## NAPLES

Visiting Naples's historic centre means travelling through 20 centuries of history. The design of its streets, piazzas, churches, monuments, public buildings and castles constitute a jewel box of artistic and historical treasures of exceptional importance. Together, they earned their spot on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1995. Naples is a real treasure of art and history, of indelible signs from past dominations, each of which has contributed to this city's construction.

The city dominates the Gulf of Naples, expanding from the Sorrentine Peninsula to the volcanic area of the Phlegraean Fields. The most famous Neapolitan piazza is **Piazza del Plebiscito**, displaying the grand colonnade designed by Gioacchino Murat; in front of it is the magnificent **Royal Palace** designed by Domenico Fontana. Castel Nuovo's different but well-integrated architectural lines, otherwise known as "**Maschio Angioino**", evoke the double role of palace and fortress that this building played during the domination of the Anjou and Aragon families.



The churches in this city are countless. Over time, the Cathedral - erected upon pre-existing buildings, has undergone radical modifications to repair the damages caused by the earthquakes, especially on the outside. The interior hosts the famous "Cappella del Tesoro di San Gennaro" ("Chapel of St. Gennaro's Treasure"), with the two vials containing the Saint's blood.

And last but not least, you will not miss the **Sansevero Chapel**, commonly called "Pietatella" (Little Pietà). Here, you will be astonished by the "Cristo Velato" (Veiled Christ) by Giuseppe Sammartino, a masterpiece striking the eye with the extraordinary craftsmanship employed to sculpt the marble shroud over the body of Christ.

Naples is famous all over the world for its *pizza*. Yet, there is much more to this unique city's culinary traditions. You will be pleasantly surprised by the variety and richness of flavours and recipes you'll discover moving to the heart of the town, with its meandering streets and artisan shops, you will taste *authentic mozzarella* and try the best street food, such as *pizza frita* or *frittatina di maccheroni*. Of course, we couldn't do without a delicious *bruschetta with Colatura di alici* (a special dressing with origins dating back to Roman times).

## POMPEII

Pompeii, the Roman city excavated from the ashes of Vesuvius, has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1997!

In 62 AD, the city was partially destroyed by an earthquake. As its reconstruction was still ongoing, on August 24, 79 AD, the eruption of Vesuvius covered the city and its suburban villas with a thick layer of stones, ashes and lapilli (thick, glassy lava). On the other hand, Herculaneum disappeared beneath a flood of volcanic mud.



The ruins of the ancient Roman cities offer an unparalleled window into the quotidian life of classical antiquity. Here, you can understand how the Romans of the 1st century AD lived: from brothels and lavatories to posh dining rooms and bathing establishments, including modern spas, health clubs and gyms. The eruption of Mount Vesuvius destroyed the town in 79 AD, and the debris ejected by the volcano covered more than 3,000 people from the volcano.

Due to its healthy climate and pleasant scenery, Pompeii was a holiday resort for wealthy Romans. It is now famous for its civic buildings lining the streets, which are still intact today.

The Surgeon's House, the House of the Faun and the House of Chaste Lovers are exceptional examples of the epoch's architecture. Another unique building is the House of Mysteries, deriving its name from the murals depicting the Dionysian cult's initiation rites (i.e., the mysteries).

A peculiar characteristic of Pompeii is the florid graffiti covering the walls in just about every building; when the volcanic eruption happened, Pompeii was set to carry out elections in the days ahead – hence the writings and ideograms, which feature both political and sexual content.

## TIVOLI

Discover one of Italy's hidden gems! Here is Tivoli, a small town about 30 Km east of Rome, boasting 2 of the most spectacular sites in Italy, **Emperor Hadrian's Villa** and **Villa d'Este**.

Emperor Hadrian built his villa to escape the crowd and turmoil of the capital. Much of the enormous, luxurious ancient villa remains intact today. You will be surprised by the innovative application of Renaissance plumbing in the fountains and waterworks, perfectly integrated with the landscape.

The other masterpiece in the area is Villa d'Este, the fantastic Villa commissioned by Cardinal Ippolito of the Este family around 1560. Among the masterpieces of the Italian Renaissance that most inspired landscape architects and painters, it is an ideal

reinterpretation - in a sumptuous way - of the hanging Eden of Babylon. The prestigious residence is surrounded by terraces, stairways, and avenues set on each other. It is decorated with water games so audacious as to reveal considerable engineering skills. The monument was elected the most beautiful park in Europe and UNESCO Heritage with the motivation: "one of the first gardens of wonders, which from the beginning had a decisive influence on the development of European landscape painting ».



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