

# Campania

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Climbing to the top of volatile **Vesuvius** (p247) and looking down into its dangerously silent crater
- Feeling like Jupiter above the Amalfi rooftops as you tackle the magnificent **Sentiero degli Dei** (Path of the Gods, p253)
- Watching the evening sun slant obliquely through the cypress trees in the wonderfully peaceful **Valle delle Ferriere** (p256)
- Gazing in the exotic shores of the island of Capri from the grass-coated tip of the **Sorrento peninsula** (p258)

**Signature food:** Pizza margherita

**Celebrated native:** Enrico Caruso (opera singer)

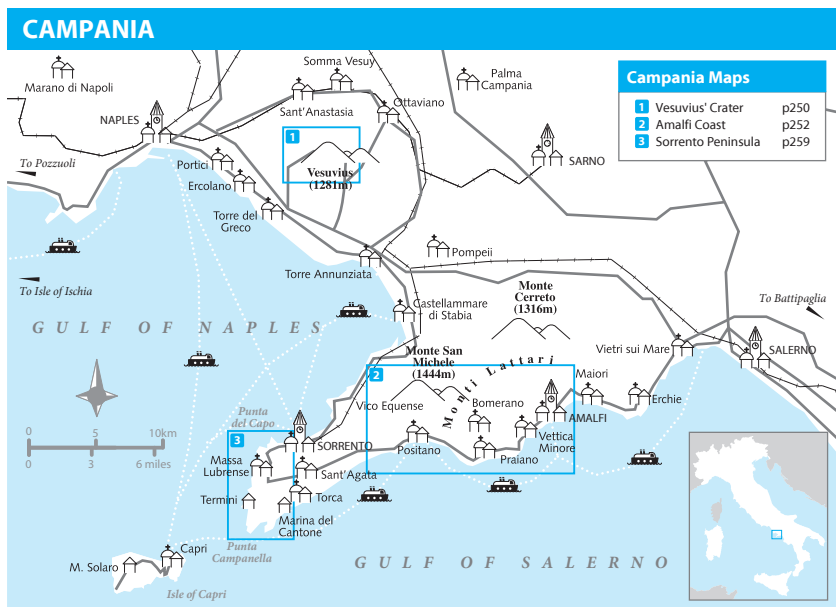
**Famous for...** Vespas

Looked at through the prism of its often-frenetic tourist industry, Italy's most densely populated region can sometimes feel more like a human zoo than a temple to history and art. But the outward mayhem belies a curious inner calm. Away from the gelato-toting tourists, Campania hides a parallel universe of ancient footpaths and deserted trails glimmering like a Botticelli masterpiece across a not-too-distant horizon.

The Amalfi coast is Campania's crowning glory, an irresistible melange of jaw-dropping vistas and steep cliffside trails that will raise your pulse in more ways than one. A Unesco World Heritage site of ancient coastal communities, the region is eerily reminiscent of Cinque Terre in Liguria, but with the temperature turned up 5°C and an even higher quota of fashionistas and sports cars.

To the west lies the glittering Sorrento peninsula where dandy aristocrats once traded poetic stanzas over post-dinner glasses of *limoncello*, while to the east legendary SITA coaches carry passengers on white-knuckle bus rides between the splayed cliffside towns. Omnipresent in almost every Neapolitan view is the volatile hulk of Mt Vesuvius, the glowering volcano that buried Roman Pompeii and still threatens to wreak significant damage to the blemished but beautiful city of Naples.





## CLIMATE

Hot, dry summers and cool, damp winters define Campania's Mediterranean climate, a pattern produced mainly by the movement of Atlantic weather fronts. In summer, the few fronts that approach the western Mediterranean are pushed north and south by a subtropical anticyclone anchored near the Azores.

Rainfall between June and September is minimal. Long hours of sunshine are the norm and temperatures are high (25°C upwards). The sirocco, a hot wind from North Africa, can make life uncomfortable by bringing humid and overcast conditions to already very warm days.

From September to November, lurking Atlantic depressions bring changeable and cloudy, though still mild (around 10°C) weather. Rainfall comes in short sharp showers. The year's rainfall is confined to about 100 days, with a total fall of 1000mm along the coast and up to 1500mm inland.

## PLANNING

### When to Walk

September to mid-May is the ideal time, when the area is relatively uncrowded and cooler weather makes walking less like a

sojourn through the Sahara; from early March until May the displays of wildflowers are superb. From mid-June to the end of August, the area is overflowing with visitors and getting about becomes something of an endurance test.

## What to Bring

Sunscreen and a shady hat are absolutely essential from April onwards. A 1.5L water bottle is indispensable; surface water is virtually nonexistent away from the towns and villages, where you'll find fountains and bars. If you're planning to camp, bring plenty of fuel for your stove; there are no reliable local sources.

## Maps

Touring Club Italiano's (TCI's) 1:200,000 *Campania-Basilicata* map is ideal for helping you find your way about. See Planning for each walk for details of specific map requirements.

## Emergency

In Campania's mountainous areas contact the **mountain rescue service** (☎ 081 551 59 50). For medical assistance call the **national emergency number** (☎ 118).

