



The Amalfi Coast

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Why Go?

Deemed by UNESCO as an outstanding example of a Mediterranean landscape, the Amalfi Coast is a beguiling combination of great beauty and gripping drama: coastal mountains plunge into the sea in a stunning vertical scene of precipitous crags, picturesque towns and lush forests.

Among the glittering string of coastal gems, legendary Positano and Amalfi sparkle the brightest, while mountain-top Ravello has the glossy fame of its grandiose villas and Wagnerian connection. Sorrento and Salerno are the two main entry points to the coast. The former, a cliff-top resort, has miraculously survived the onslaught of package tourism while Salerno is a workaday port with an unhurried charm and vibrant historic centre.

Aside from its sheer beauty, the Amalfi Coast is home to some superb restaurants and hotels. It is also one of Italy's top regions for hiking, with well-marked trails providing a great way of getting away from the clamour on the coast.

Best Places to Eat

- » Donna Rosa (p157)
- » Next 2 (p157)
- » Marina Grande (p166)
- » L'Antica Trattoria (p147)

Best Places to Stay

- » Pensione Maria Luisa (p206)
- » Ulisse (p204)
- » Hotel Caruso (p209)
- » Hotel Lidomare (p208)

Road Distance (KM)

Amalfi	25			
Positano	13	10		
Ravello	32	03	16	
Minori	30	05	15	06
	Sorrento	Amalfi	Positano	Ravello

Getting Around

Consider well-connected Sorrento your base and luxuriate in ferry travel, which connects the major resorts from April to September. Bicycles and scooters can be useful for exploring inland, as can your own two legs with the numerous walking trails in the area. The Circumvesuviana train runs from Naples' Piazza Garibaldi to Sorrento, from where there are regular buses to Positano, Amalfi and Salerno. For ultimate flexibility, consider renting a car in Sorrento and, if you're game, driving along the famous Amalfi Coast road. Overall, although distances between the resorts and towns are not great, congestion in the summer months means car travel can be slow.

THREE PERFECT DAYS

Day 1: Take to the Seas

Wake up in picturesque Positano and head for the Spiaggia Grande, to sip a cappuccino overlooking the bodies-beautiful and bobbing fishing boats. Peruse the fashions, duck into the church and stroll around the cliff to low-key Forno for lunch. Catch a ferry to pretty Amalfi and explore the extraordinary cathedral, the museums, the medieval backstreets and the *pasticcerie*. Have dinner in lovely, atmospheric Atrani, a short stroll away.

Day 2: Hike Amid Stunning Scenery

Hiking trails wend their way through compelling coastal routes and countryside. Energetic souls can stride out on the poetically named *Sentiero degli Dei* (Walk of the Gods), high up in the hills. It takes six hours, so it is breathtaking in all senses of the word. If this sounds daunting, there are some delightful shorter walks available; tourist offices and bookshops can provide maps.

Day 3: Head for the Wild West

Rent a car from Sorrento and take in the mountains and seascapes in this little-known corner. Leave town on the minor coastal road, winding through groves of olive and lemon trees. Dip down to the beach at Marina di Puolo, admire the view of Capri from the lookout in Massa Lubrense and head for dramatic Punta della Campanella. Continue to Nerano, and walk to Baia di Leranto beach (the walk takes about an hour), before carrying on to tranquil Sant'Agata sui due Golfi and doubling back to Sorrento.

Accommodation

If you are planning on exploring beyond the coast, Sorrento has the best transport connections and is a good base. Positano, Amalfi and Ravello have some of the classiest accommodation in Italy, ranging from sumptuous *palazzi* to exquisite B&Bs. Book ahead in summer and remember most hotels close over the winter. For more information, see the Accommodation chapter (p194).

DON'T MISS

This is one of the most stunning and accessible regions for exploring on foot. There are numerous well marked trails ranging from straightforward strolls on reasonably level terrain to more taxing puff-you-out hikes.

Best Food Festivals

- » Sagra della Salsiccia e Ceppone (Sorrento; p147)
- » Gustaminori (Minori; p172)
- » Sagra del Tonno (Cetara; p173)

Best Beaches

- » Baia de Leranto (p148)
- » Spiaggia di Fornillo (p156)
- » Marina di Praia (p162)
- » Bagni Regina Giovanna (p145)

Resources

- » **Positano Online** (www.positanoonline.it) General tourist information about Positano.
- » **Sorrento Online** (www.sorrento-online.com) General tourist information about Sorrento.
- » **Amalfi Coast Web** (www.amalficoastweb.com) Guide to services throughout the Amalfi Coast.