

welcome to Naples, Pompeii & the Amalfi Coast



History & Art

Few parts of Europe would dare compare their cultural riches to those of Naples and its fabled surrounds. A former royal capital, Naples has been home to countless cultural deities, from painter Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio to sculptor Cosimo Fanzago and composer Alessandro Scarlatti. The region lays claim to Italy's largest opera house and royal palace, many of the country's finest paintings, sculptures and frescoes, and not to mention a large share of Graeco-Roman ruins. Let your imagination run wild at the temples at Paestum, on the chariot-grooved streets of Pompeii, or in the frescoed magnificence of Villa Oplontis. Compare the Gothic minimalism of Naples' Complesso

Monumentale di San Lorenzo Maggiore to the outrageous rococo of its Chiesa di San Gregorio Armeno. From frescoes to marble carvings, the region's glut of artistic marvels will satiate the greediest cultural appetites.

Culinary Riches

Naples and its region are the country's culinary soul, home to Italy's best pizza, pasta, mozzarella, vegetables, citrus and seafood. It's like one never-ending feast; wood-fired pizza and potent espresso in Naples, long, lazy lunches at Cilento *agriturismi* (farm stays), *alici fritte* (fried sardines) on weathered Tyrrhenian islands and lavish pastries in chintzy Salerno *pasticcerie* (pastry shops). Even the simplest bite can be a revelation,



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Naples, Pompeii and the Amalfi Coast is the Italy of your wildest and most lingering dreams: a rich, intense, hypnotic ragù of Arabesque street life, decadent palaces, pastel-hued villages and aria-worthy vistas.

(left) Harbour at Marina Grande (p113), Capri
(below) Spaghetti alla vongole (spaghetti with clams)



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from salty, almond-flavoured *taralli* (round, savoury biscuits), to the sweet, fluffy ricotta inside a *sfogliatella* (ricotta-filled pastry). Should you scour the markets for seasonal produce? Tuck into *coniglio all'Ischitana* (Ischian-style rabbit) at a rustic island trattoria? Pick up some famous *colatura di alici* (anchovy essence) in Cetara? Or just kick back with a crisp local Falanghina as you debate who has the creamiest buffalo mozzarella – Caserta or Paestum? Whatever your choice, be certain that good food and wine are always just around the corner.

Natural Highs

Mother Nature went into overdrive in Campania, creating a thrilling jumble of

rugged mountains, steaming fumaroles, and dazzling coastal grottoes. It's like one giant playground begging for a tackle, be it fast-paced and furious, or romantic and relaxed. Crank up the pulse rate exploring bat-filled grottoes at the Grotta di Castelvita, cave diving off the Capri coast, or feeling the earth's subterranean wrath at the Solfatara Crater. If you need to bring it down a notch, the options are just as enticing, from horse-riding the slopes of Mt Vesuvius to sailing your way along the Amalfi Coast or simply stripping down and soaking at a thermal beach on Ischia. The options may be many, but there is one constant – a landscape that is beautiful, diverse, and just a little magic.