

Amalfi & Islands Destination Guide

Ischia

Ischia Town- The island of Ischia boasts wonderful seaside vistas, ancient castles and relaxing thermal baths. Centered around the dormant volcano of Mount Epomeo, this island and its towns are bursting with flavor and charm. The largest town, known simply as Ischia, is the main port for ferries and hydrofoils. Beyond the port itself, the town has luxury hotels and an upscale shopping district along Corso Vittorio Colonna. The other section of town, known as Ischia Ponte, includes a perfect street for a passeggiata (or evening stroll), a Roman-style aqueduct and the Castello Aragonese.

Castello Aragonese- First built in 474 BC by Hiero I of Syracuse, the castle has changed hands many times over the years, but when conquerors landed it was always a refuge for the villagers. The island's volcano, Mount Epomeo, has erupted a few times, destroying the island's towns and separating the castle's small island (Insula Minor) from the larger body (Insula Major). With a rich history of clashes and diversity, the castle has served as a bastion of art and literature, of suffering and imprisonment, of sanctuary and faith. Nowadays, it is primarily an auditorium and gallery for artists. Guided tours are conducted daily, or you can just grab a seat and dine on Il Terrazzo and enjoy the wonderful views over the Bay of Naples.

Thermal Baths- Because of the region's geothermal activity, dozens of hot springs are scattered across the island of Ischia.

Our hotel, the TRITONE, has a fully complement of SPA services ranging from Thermal bathes, Mud bath, massage, facial treatments, body treatments, and more. Be sure to schedule treatments and service as soon as you know our group touring schedule.

Spa Thermal waters range from 28° to 40° C (82° to 104° F), the baths have attracted millions of visitors worldwide for therapeutic healing and relaxation over more than two-and-a-half millennia. If you get tired of the hot springs, step onto the beaches or lounge in and around the regular pools scattered around the grounds. Once you've finished your soak, have a bite to eat or enjoy a glass of wine on the terrace.

According to Roman myth, there are a few legends explaining the origins of the thermal baths on Ischia.

Taken from Poseidon's website: "the myth of the giant Typhon explains, poetically, the tormented volcanic origin of Ischia. Defeated by the challenge for dominance on Olympus with Jupiter, Typhon crashed to the Earth and remained imprisoned in the depths of the island.

The giant then invoked the help of Venus Cytherea as he implored Jupiter to forgive him. Hot tears of repentance dripped from his eyes and Jupiter, moved with compassion, forgave Typhon by turning his tears into the healthiest gift mother nature has ever granted men: thermal waters.

The myth of Venus Cytherea (goddess of beauty, Aphrodite for the Greeks). Saddened by the sudden death of Adonis, whom she was in love with, Venus prayed to Jupiter to bring him back to life: but Persephone, goddess of the dead, was also in love with him. Jupiter thus ruled that for part of the year Adonis would remain in the realm of shadows and that he would return to the land of living for the rest of the year. The goddess went to the island of Ischia with her ship, mourning the death of her beloved. From her hot tears, a new spring was born that would be known as Citara.”

Giardini la Mortella- These botanical gardens were built in 1958 by Lady Susanna Walton in the city of Fario on the western side of the island. Concerts are held on the grounds in spring and autumn. La Mortella is a spectacular subtropical and Mediterranean garden where vibrant colors, fragrant aromas and entrancing fountains combine for a magical experience. Stroll through the lower Valley Garden to enjoy the hydrangeas and magnolias, along with the rare Ginkgo Biloba, and see the Fontana Bassa and Octagonal Fountain. After the humid and enveloping Valley Garden, visit the sunny, open upper Hill Garden to take in the Greek Amphitheater, the Garden of Aloes and wonderful views of the surrounding land.

Capri

Capri is the biggest town on the island of the same name. The port here on the eastern side of the isle will funnel in visitors, those who are staying for the day or those who plan a longer vacation on the beautiful island. The old town is centered around the Piazza Umberto I, commonly known as the Piazzetta. The city is crowded most of the year, day or night. Near the piazza, the dome of the Baroque church Santo Stefano can be seen above the crowd, a quiet contrast to the bustling below. If you're interested in exploring, make your way through the twisting alleys that surround the piazza or take your money down to Via Camerelle for a luxurious shopping excursion.

On the other side of Monte Solaro sits the quieter town of Anacapri. The bus from Capri will stop at Piazza Vittoria just below the chairlift to Monte Solaro. If you're interested in a nice view, it's tough to beat a mountaintop, so just hop on the chairlift and ride it up to the summit to get a panorama of the island and the sea. When you decide it's time to take in the city of Anacapri, head down Via Giuseppe Orlandi to visit the artisanal workshops and the Casa Rossa, where you can find the original Roman statues from the Grotto Azzurra (Blue Grotto). Also of note here are a museum (the Villa San Michele), the church of San Michele and the excavations at Emperor Tiberius' Villa Damecuta.

The island's greatest allure is probably the Grotto Azzurra, a large sea cave that is illuminated by a dazzling, mystical blue light. This natural phenomenon is created by the sunlight reflecting from the bottom of the sea. The grotto used to be adorned with several of the stone statues now found at the Casa Rossa back in Anacapri. If you plan a visit, make sure to check on availability, as the grotto can be closed due to weather or during high tide.

If you are a lover of natural wonders, the Arco Naturale (Natural Arch) is not to be missed. It's a bit of a hike to get there, but the walking trails and landscapes are worth the view. Once you arrive, you'll find the remains of a collapsed grotto that dates back to Paleolithic times.

And for those interested in ancient Roman ruins, take a trip to Villa Jovis. Built by Emperor Tiberius, the location for this retreat was chosen for its seclusion. Take note of the

unique feature called 'Tiberius' Drop,' where his victims were purported to have been thrown to their deaths into the sea.

Procida

This charming island won the title of Italian Capital of Culture in 2022. Though smaller than the other islands of the region, Procida is not lacking in glamor. And if you've seen too many other tourists thus far on your journey, hopefully the Amalfi Coast's best kept secret will provide you with a respite from the bigger crowds.

If you approach the island from the east, you should catch a glimpse of the Terra Murata's high, strong walls built to fend off raiders and pirates. At the foot of the Terra Murata, the buildings and houses along the Marina Corricella will bombard you with color and flair and personality.

Should you wish to brave the walk up Salita Castello to the highest point of Terra Murata, the Palazzo d'Avalos, which served as the old prison, you'll be rewarded with majestic, sweeping views of both the island and the sea. The Abbazia di San Michele Arcangelo dominates the walled citadel. Although it has since been rebuilt, the original Benedictine abbey dates back to 1026. Tours are offered daily from Easter to the end of the year.

If you're not feeling up to tackling the hill to reach the abbey, visit one of the many restaurants, pizzerias and bars that line the vibrant streets of the marina, many of which have outdoor seating where you can enjoy views of the water. You can easily lose track of time exploring all its hidden stairways and winding alleys. Or if you'd rather take a dip in the sea, there are plenty of beaches surrounded by verdant, rocky cliffs on the western side of the island where you can swim and sunbathe.

No matter what you choose, you should have no trouble relaxing on the beautiful island of Procida.

Pompeii

The city preserved in time, just as the victims were preserved in Mount Vesuvius' ashes. Reading about the events at Pompeii will never be quite the same as standing inside the walls of the ancient city. Or seeing the plaster casts of thirteen people at the Garden of the Fugitives who were trying to flee the city when they were swallowed up by the ashes. The incredible procedure used to preserve them about 150 years ago is still used in excavations to this day.

As with many of the Roman cities from that time, you'll find a forum, an amphitheater, baths, a brothel, an aqueduct and a cobblestone thoroughfare, all well preserved. Surprisingly, even some of the frescoes have been saved. As you walk down the streets, try to think what it might have been like to stand there two thousand years ago on that cold October day when the volcano erupted. How you might have felt as you turned around and reentered the city, totally unsuspecting of what was to come. The chilling realization that you couldn't escape your fate. And think, too, just how much this city has captivated our imagination for two millennia, historian and layperson alike.

Sorrento

Sorrento has been a popular resort town for three centuries, though its history dates back to the ancient Greeks. Their influence can still be seen in the layout of the town at the city's center. There are beaches open—usually for a fee—near both Marina Grande and Marina Piccola, but the marinas' are primarily frequented by the many ferries and boats coming and going to Naples and the nearby islands. Near the top of Via Marina Piccolo you'll find Piazza Tasso, a charming plaza where many a passeggiata begins and ends. From the piazza, a short walk down Corso Italia takes you to the Duomo, an ancient building that has seen its fair share of rebuilding and remodeling. Inside stands a marble throne that dates back to the sixteenth century.

Scattered throughout the town are several points of interest. Near the Duomo, the Sedile Dominova and its plaza were once used by the nobility as an assembly hall. The Museo Bottega della Tarsialignea shows off Sorrento's long tradition of inlaying wood. It includes ornate furniture and both natural and stained wood dating back as much as three centuries. Make sure to take note of the decorated ceilings on the second floor if you visit. Closer to the water stands the old church of San Francesco. The grounds are peaceful, and the cloisters are filled with fragrant Bougainvillea flowers. And if you drop in for a visit to the church, be sure to traipse over to the nearby Villa Comunale. It provides a thin stretch of green and a park with a nice view overlooking the Marina Piccola and the Bay of Naples.

Closer to the outskirts of town, near Marina Grande, stands an old Roman ruin now called Bagno della Regina Giovanna. You can make your way to the site through an old arch near the water, a great secluded spot for swimming. Up above you'll find the ancient Roman walls and the remains of a heating system under the floor. Similarly secluded is the nearby Marina di Puolo, one of the best beaches in the area. Surrounded by small boats and fishers' cottages that line the beach, it's a perfect spot for sunbathing or swimming.

At I Giardini di Cataldo in the center of town, you can walk through the lemon grove and purchase all sorts of lemon-based products. And don't forget to visit the Museo Correale di Terranova, Sorrento's most important museum. Everything from furnishings to china and ceramics, glassware and paintings can be found here. Even the building itself, an ancient villa, is worthy of note.

Once you finish with the sights, visit some of the diners that line the pier of Marina Grande. Grab a bite and enjoy the sea breeze with some of the locals who sail in on their boats over the spring and summer months to visit. Make sure to tip back a glass of limoncello in the city of Sorrento, as the lemons here are famous throughout the region.