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Insider's Guide to the Amalfi Coast

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The Amalfi Coast is Italy's most celebrated coastline, and for good reason. The cliffside villages, posh beach clubs and superb sea views deliver the kind of beauty that makes even seasoned travelers take notice.

Here, the Mediterranean sparkles with below terraced lemon groves and pastel-hued towns, while restaurants dish up freshly caught seafood and locally crafted limoncello. The pace moves exactly as vacation should — unhurried and deliberate, with days measured in scenic boat rides, leisurely meals and epic sunsets.

While the steep terrain and sophisticated atmosphere make this region better suited for romantic getaways than family adventures with young children, that's precisely why it remains honeymoon territory par excellence.

Whether you're marking a milestone or just need to remember what luxury actually feels like, the Amalfi Coast delivers that rare blend of historic soul and timeless glamour that keeps it permanently on the travel A-list. Read on to discover where to stay, eat and what to do across the Amalfi Coast.

Need to know



Image courtesy of Le Sirenuse

Visiting the Amalfi Coast is all about embracing a more relaxed pace. Keep noise to a minimum in residential areas and avoid playing loud music at the beach. During peak times, make dinner reservations in advance as popular restaurants fill up quickly. Meals are also meant to be savored, not rushed.

The region is generally safe, but it's always best to stay alert in busy tourist areas like Positano and Amalfi. Towns are also well-equipped with pharmacies and clinics, but it's smart to carry travel insurance.

Italy uses the 24-hour clock (e.g., 17:00 = 5 PM), and power outlets require type C or F plugs (230V, 50Hz), so bring an adapter if needed.

Currency: Euro (EUR) is the local currency. Credit cards are accepted in most restaurants and shops, but cash is helpful for small purchases, taxis and local markets. ATMs are also available across the area.

Languages: Italian is the official language, but English is widely spoken due to tourism. Be sure to greet locals with a warm “buongiorno” or “ciao.” It goes a long way.

Airports: Naples International Airport (NAP) is the closest major airport to the Amalfi Coast. Flights arrive from major European hubs, so many travelers may connect through cities like Rome or London. There are also seasonal US departures from New York City, Chicago, Philadelphia and Atlanta. A new, smaller airport has also opened (though not fully operational until 2026) — Salerno Costa d'Amalfi Airport (QSR) offers mostly seasonal flights on European low-cost carriers.

Transportation: To get to the Amalfi Coast from the airports, taxis and private car transfers could take anywhere from one to two or more hours. Be aware that roads are narrow and winding, offering scenic but sometimes slow travel. Parking is also very limited, so renting a car is not advised. The Circumvesuviana train connects Naples and Sorrento in one hour for a convenient and budget-friendly option. During peak season, ferries also run between Naples and Sorrento, providing a scenic and often quicker alternative to driving. These ferries also connect to towns like Positano, Amalfi and Ravello. If traveling between towns on the coast, ferries are quicker and scenic.

Best time to visit: The Amalfi Coast can get hot and crowded during summer months (June to August), so plan to visit during spring (March to May) and fall (September to October). This time provides warm weather, fewer crowds and a more relaxed atmosphere. Be aware that many businesses close in the winter off-season from November to March.

Ideal length of stay: A stay of at least three nights is recommended for an essential Amalfi Coast experience. You'll get dining, see iconic sites and take a sunset cruise, though it may feel a bit rushed. If you can stay five to seven nights, this is best to also sightsee and take day trips. It will feel more relaxed and you can be more immersed in the region.

Signature dishes:

- **Sorrento:** *Gnocchi alla Sorrentina* (baked gnocchi with tomato, mozzarella and basil), *delizia al limone* (lemon cake with citrus cream) and *spaghetti alle vongole* (pasta with clams, garlic and olive oil).
- **Positano:** *Scialatielli ai frutti di mare* (pasta with local seafood), *torta caprese* (chocolate almond cake) and *insalata di polpo* (octopus salad with lemon and potatoes).
- **Amalfi:** *Linguine al limone* (creamy lemon pasta), *totani e patate* (squid stewed with potatoes) and *delizia amalfitana* (lemon sponge cake with cream).
- **Ravello:** *Risotto al limone* (lemon risotto, sometimes with shrimp), *parmigiana di melanzane* (baked eggplant with tomato and cheese) and *ricotta e pere* (pear and ricotta cake).

Key phrases: *Ciao* (hello / goodbye), *buongiorno* (good morning), *buonasera* (good evening), *arrivederci* / *adiós* (goodbye), *scusi* (excuse me / I'm sorry), *grazie* (thank you), *per favore* (please), *sì* / *no* (yes / no).

What to wear: The Amalfi Coast's warm days call for light, breathable fabrics, and comfy shoes for cobbled streets and stairs. For dinners and upscale establishments, lean smart-casual — linen, espadrilles, breezy dresses. Bring a light layer for cooler nights. Remember to dress modestly when visiting churches or religious sites — cover shoulders and knees out of respect.

Sorrento



Image courtesy of Parco dei Principi Sorrento

Sorrento is the perfect place to stay for exploring the Amalfi Coast (plus Pompeii). It blends coastal charm with historic appeal and has a town center that's easily walkable with shops, cafes and views across the Bay of Naples. Sorrento is a popular home base for travelers who want easy access to day trips. Ferries in the Sorrento port can take you to Capri, Naples and towns along the Amalfi Coast.

Where to stay

Parco dei Principi Sorrento: This elegant clifftop escape has views of the entire Bay of Naples. Mid-century modern and Italian design blend to create a unique atmosphere. Gardens, a private beach deck and infinity pool overlooking the sea elevate this beautiful seaside hotel.

- **Fora Reserve perks** include a welcome amenity, daily breakfast, an upgrade and extended check-in/out whenever possible.

Grand Hotel Capodimonte: A high-end hillside retreat with views of the Bay of Naples and Mount Vesuvius. Multiple terraced pools, Mediterranean gardens and classic Italian design

make it the perfect escape for couples, honeymooners or anyone seeking a romantic escape.

Hotel Bellevue Syrene: This former 18th-century villa turned cliffside hotel blends history and contemporary luxury. Private sea view terraces, a sunbathing deck by the sea and world-class dining make it an intimate, romantic choice just steps from Sorrento's historic center.

Positano



Image courtesy of Hotel Villa Franca Positano

Positano is the iconic cliffside town most people think of when they hear the Amalfi Coast. Its dramatic landscape and romantic atmosphere make it picture perfect. Steep, winding streets are lined with artisan boutiques and cafes. Pastel buildings also house upscale dining and luxury hotels, adding to its appeal to honeymooners and couples.

Where to stay

Hotel Villa Franca Positano: This hilltop retreat overlooking Positano has incredible views, great service and privacy. Spacious rooms with modern design, a rooftop pool and restaurant

with panoramic views make it a relaxing choice with easy access to the vibrant town.

- **Fora Reserve perks** include a \$100 hotel credit, daily breakfast, an upgrade and extended check-in/out whenever possible.

Le Sirenuse: An iconic, high-end escape defined by timeless elegance and breathtaking views. Once a private villa, this family-run hotel features hand-painted tile, antique furnishings and Michelin-starred cuisine for the ultimate Amalfi Coast experience.

- **Fora Perks** include a \$100 spa credit, daily breakfast, an upgrade and extended check-in/out whenever possible.

Villa Treville: This secluded cliffside sanctuary was once the private estate of famed opera director Franco Zeffirelli. This grandeur extends from the individually designed suites to the gardens, numerous terraces and the villa's exclusive beach access.

- **Fora Perks** include a \$100 hotel credit, daily breakfast, an upgrade and extended check-in/out whenever possible.

Covo Dei Saraceni: Located just above the marina and main beach, this full-service retreat is especially convenient. With its multi-level pool, art deco style and bright, private terraced rooms make it the perfect choice to be in the heart of Positano.

Amalfi



Image courtesy of Borgo Santandrea

Amalfi blends history with a grounded feeling, making it a unique town on the Amalfi Coast. Centered around the Duomo di Sant'Andrea, the town features lively piazzas, local lemon products and a bustling harbor. It's a great choice for travelers who want a more central base in a larger town to then explore the smaller villages along the coast.

Where to stay

Casa Angelina: This adults-only boutique retreat is tucked away above Praiano. Blending minimalism with coastal beauty, guests can enjoy understated luxury alongside a private beach club, gourmet dining and rooftop terrace.

- **Fora Reserve perks** include a \$100 hotel credit, daily breakfast, an upgrade and extended check-in/out whenever possible.

Borgo Santandrea: A fresh, contemporary retreat blends mid-century and Mediterranean style on the cliffs outside Amalfi. Bold tiles, vintage furniture and panoramic terraces highlight the experience, while a private beach and personalized service make it the perfect choice.

- **Fora Perks** include a \$100 food & beverage credit, daily breakfast, an upgrade and extended check-in/out whenever possible.

Hotel Santa Caterina: Historic charm pairs with timeless luxury at this family-owned cliffside villa-turned-hotel. From hand-painted tiles and antique furnishings, to terraced gardens and a private beach club, this secluded retreat has grandeur, privacy and attentive service.

- **Fora Perks** include a \$100 food & beverage credit, daily breakfast, an upgrade and extended check-in/out whenever possible.

Ravello



Image courtesy of Caruso, A Belmond Hotel, Amalfi Coast

Ravello is a peaceful and romantic escape above the coastline. Favored by artists and musicians, the town is known for its abundant gardens and historic villas. Ravello is ideal for

those who appreciate scenic views and cultural experiences while being a bit more removed from the hustle-and-bustle of the seafront towns.

Where to stay

Palazzo Avino: Housed in a restored villa, old-world charm meets modern sophistication at this chic retreat. Meticulously designed rooms, an award-winning restaurant and unparalleled service make this a refined offering far from the crowds.

- **Fora Perks** include a \$100 spa credit, daily breakfast, an upgrade and extended check-in/out whenever possible.

Caruso, A Belmond Hotel, Amalfi Coast: This 11th-century palace-turned-hotel is opulent and iconic. World-renowned service, spa and infinity pool make this a destination in and of itself, with a location that makes it easy to explore all that the Amalfi Coast has to offer.

- **Fora's Belmond Bellini Club** partner perks include a hotel credit, daily breakfast, an upgrade and extended check-in/out whenever possible.

Villa Margherita, Amalfi Coast: A high-end boutique retreat in a restored villa that's surrounded by gardens and Mediterranean views. Rooms feature classic Italian design, while the hotel offers a cozy pool, personalized service and quiet location.

- **Fora's Belmond Bellini Club** partner perks include a hotel credit, daily breakfast, an upgrade and extended check-in/out whenever possible.

History and culture





Images courtesy of Palazzo Avino

The Amalfi Coast has a rich, layered history that continues to add to its modern appeal. Once a powerful maritime republic in the 9th and 10th centuries, Amalfi was a key player in Mediterranean trade. They developed one of the first maritime codes, the *Tabula Amalphitana*, which influenced seafaring laws for centuries. Remnants of this golden era can still be seen in the grand Cathedral of Sant'Andrea in Amalfi, which mixes Arab-Norman, Gothic and Baroque styles. Across the coast, historic watchtowers dot the cliffs (you can even rent some!), originally built to defend against pirate raids.

The region's deep Catholic roots are reflected in religious festivals, like the Festa di Sant'Andrea in Amalfi, where the patron saint is celebrated with processions and fireworks. In Ravello, the legacy of music and art lives on through the famous Ravello Festival, held each summer in the gardens of Villa Rufolo, once a gathering place for artists, composers and writers. Local traditions like limoncello-making, ceramic crafting and hand-painted tiles still thrive in towns like Vietri sul Mare and Sorrento, passed down through generations. The Amalfi Coast may have scenic views, but it's also a place with rich culture and history tightly woven into the communities' everyday lives.

Cultural celebrations & events

- **Settimana della Cultura (Amalfi Coast, April):** This week-long celebration showcases the region's rich history with art exhibits, live music and tours of iconic landmarks.
- **La Festa di Sant'Andrea (Amalfi, June 27):** Amalfi comes alive with a parade, fireworks and celebrations honoring Saint Andrew, the town's beloved patron.
- **Ravello Festival (July–August):** One of Italy's top summer events, this world-renowned festival features classical music and opera performances in the settings of Villa Rufolo and Villa Cimbrone.
- **Luminaria di San Domenico (Positano, August 4):** Thousands of candles light up Positano's streets during this nighttime procession and celebration for San Domenico.
- **Feast of the Madonna della Lobra (Sorrento, August 15):** Sorrento celebrates their town's patron saint with a festival of lively processions, music and fireworks.

- **Luminaria di Sant'Andrea (Amalfi, November 30):** This tribute to Saint Andrew fills the town of Amalfi with lanterns and lights in honor of their protector.

Activities



The Amalfi Coast lives up to the hype. You can spend your mornings exploring ancient streets and churches, then hop on a boat to see the coast from a different angle, or just claim your spot on a beach and let the day slip by with a cold drink in hand.

Sorrento

- **Corso Italia:** Wander along Sorrento's lively Corso Italia, filled with designer stores, local artisans and cozy cafés. Here you can pick up unique souvenirs like handcrafted leather items, colorful ceramics and locally produced limoncello.
- **Local culture:** Visit Museo Bottega della Tarsia Ligna to see intricate inlaid woodwork on display. Join a cooking class and learn to prepare fresh pasta and regional dishes. Stop by local distilleries for limoncello tastings.

- **Boating:** Cruise the Amalfi Coast by private or group boat, stopping at hidden beaches and soaking up the sea views.
- **Capri:** For a chic day trip, head to Capri for high-end shopping, iconic scenery and a chance to explore the famous Blue Grotto.
- **Laid-back:** Relax at a beach club with seaside dining and sunbeds, or enjoy drinks at a clifftop bar with panoramic views of the Bay of Naples. Take in sunset views from Villa Comunale Park and stroll along scenic coastal paths.

Positano

- **The town:** Wander the winding streets of Positano, packed with colorful bougainvillea flowers. Stop at boutique shops, local galleries and cafés with sea views.
- **Landmarks:** Discover the iconic Church of Santa Maria Assunta, which houses a famous 13th-century Byzantine icon of the Black Madonna.
- **Beaches:** Spend the day lounging on Positano's iconic pebbled Spiaggia Grande. To escape the crowds, take a short walk to Fornillo Beach.
- **Hiking:** Active travelers can hike the famous Sentiero degli Dei (Path of the Gods) for views of the coastline, surrounding hills and distant islands.
- **Boating:** Set out on a private or group boat tour along the Amalfi Coast, with stops in secluded coves and sea caves along the way.
- **Cooking class:** Learn to prepare traditional Italian dishes with a hands-on cooking class. These are often hosted in scenic hillside locations or seaside restaurants.

Amalfi

- **Landmarks:** Explore the Piazza del Duomo and the 9th-century Cathedral of Sant'Andrea, known for its Arab-Norman striped façade.
- **Boating:** Set off on a private boat excursion along the coast or to Capri. Swim in hidden coves, visit sea grottoes and enjoy aperitivo onboard.
- **Art:** Browse contemporary and local artwork at La Caravella Art Gallery, housed in one of Amalfi's oldest fine dining spots.
- **Cooking:** Join a hands-on cooking class at a nearby lemon farm. Learn to make fresh pasta and regional dishes surrounded by terraced citrus groves.
- **Hiking:** For a quiet nature escape, hike through the Valle delle Ferriere. This reserve above the town features waterfalls, rare plants and old ironworks ruins.

Ravello

- **Historic villas:** Wander the peaceful gardens and take in panoramic views from Villa Cimbrone and the 13th-century Villa Rufolo (which famously inspired Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*).
- **Ravello Festival:** Experience the Ravello Festival, an annual celebration of classical music and opera held in the open-air settings of Villa Rufolo and Villa Cimbrone.
- **Shopping:** Stroll through the quiet streets of Ravello, filled with artisan shops selling hand-painted ceramics, jewelry and other locally made crafts.
- **Limoncello:** Enjoy a limoncello tasting at the tranquil Lemon Garden, surrounded by fragrant citrus groves.
- **Spa day:** Treat yourself to a spa day at one of Ravello's luxury resorts, complete with massages, facials and organic wellness treatments.

Cruising the Amalfi Coast



Image courtesy of SeaDream Yacht Club

Cruise lines love to visit the Amalfi Coast, but most mass market lines dock in Naples. They also typically only stay in the area for one day on larger itineraries out of Rome (Civitavecchia).

For a real Amalfi Coast experience, you'll want to look to smaller ships.

SeaDream Yacht Club: This intimate yacht-style cruise line operates twin mega-yachts, SeaDream I and SeaDream II, each accommodating up to 112 guests. Because of their size, they're able to offer more immersive itineraries and call at Amalfi, Capri, Sorrento and Positano along the Amalfi Coast.

Silversea Cruises: An ultra-luxury expedition cruise line with larger ships that still feel intimate (some accommodate up to 728 passengers). Their itineraries in the area tend to call at Amalfi, Capri and Sorrento.

Some other small ship cruise lines that call at Amalfi Coast ports include Windstar Cruises, Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection, Scenic Ocean Cruises and Explora Journeys.

Add-on destinations



It's easy to combine a trip to the Amalfi Coast with a visit to another part of Italy. These nearby destinations offer a mix of culture, relaxation and coastal beauty. The best part is they're all

either a short ferry, flight or train ride away.

Capri (30 minutes by ferry): A glamorous island with soaring cliffs, designer shops and the famous Blue Grotto. While it's an easy day trip, you can opt to stay overnight to enjoy the quieter evenings.

Ischia (1 hour by ferry): Known for its natural hot springs and peaceful beaches. Ischia is a wellness travelers' dream with gardens, spa resorts and thermal waters.

Naples (1 hour by ferry or 1.5 hours by car): A lively city rich in history, art and food — especially pizza. Naples is also the gateway to Pompeii, offering a fascinating look into life in ancient Rome.

Sicily (1 hour by flight): Italy's largest island blends diverse cultural influences, historic ruins and dramatic landscapes. Explore cities like Palermo and Catania or hike Mount Etna.

Florence (3 to 4 hours by train): A Renaissance city filled with museums, churches and art. Florence is perfect for travelers interested in Italian history, architecture and fashion.

Rome (3 to 4 hours by train): From the Colosseum to the Vatican, Rome offers an unmatched mix of ancient landmarks and buzzing street life. It's perfect for a fast-paced cultural immersion experience.

Puglia (3 to 4 hours by car): A sun-drenched region known for its whitewashed towns, olive groves and pristine beaches. It's a great choice for a relaxed road trip and a taste of southern Italian charm.

If not the Amalfi Coast...



These destinations offer similar coastlines, scenic towns and Mediterranean vibes if you're looking for a change of pace from the Amalfi Coast.

Porto Ercole, Italy: A quiet coastal escape with luxury stays, beautiful beaches and easy access to Tuscany's rugged shoreline. It's a refined and much less crowded alternative to the Amalfi Coast.

Cinque Terre, Italy: This string of colorful villages along the Ligurian coast combines hiking, seaside views and a more relaxed pace. It's ideal for travelers seeking a laid-back Italian coastal getaway.

Santorini, Greece: Known for its iconic white-washed architecture and sunset views, Santorini delivers a blend of luxury, culture and gorgeous Aegean scenery.

Corsica, France: A lesser-known gem with dramatic mountain landscapes, quiet beaches and picturesque towns. It's a peaceful option for travelers looking for natural beauty and French island culture.

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