



ACADEMY
TRAVEL

TAILORED
SMALL GROUP
JOURNEYS

POMPEII, CAPRI & THE BAY OF NAPLES

ANCIENT SITES, CHIC ISLANDS
& PICTURESQUE TOWNS

OVERVIEW

Since ancient times, artists, writers, and poets have been captivated by the Bay of Naples, a region of unsurpassed natural beauty lying a few hours south of Rome.

While the physical landscape of the region has been shaped by its spectacular volcanic geomorphology, its rich cultural landscape reflects the diverse influences of the Greek, Roman, Arab, Norman, German, Aragonese, Spanish, Bourbon and French settlers drawn to the region over the centuries.

Archaeologist Dr Estelle Lazer leads this 16-day tour, exploring the unique history, archaeology, and culture of this extraordinary region. Beginning and ending in Rome we spend six nights on the Bay of Naples itself, including four nights in the coastal town of Sorrento and two nights on Capri – enjoying this lovely island free of day-trippers. Seven nights in Naples offers the opportunity to understand and appreciate the magnificent art and architecture of this fascinating city.

Outstanding archaeological sites, ancient villas and palaces, world class art, delicious regional cuisine and glamorous towns scattered along a dramatic coastline overlooked by Mount Vesuvius make this region an unmissable experience.



TOUR LEADER

Dr Estelle Lazer is an archaeologist with an international reputation for her research on the skeletal remains at Pompeii. She has spent many years in the Bay of Naples.

TOUR DATES

April 5-20, 2024

TOUR PRICE

\$13,970 per person, twin share
\$4,295 single supplement

TOUR DEPOSIT

A **\$1,000** non-refundable deposit is required per person to confirm your booking on tour.

GROUP SIZE

Maximum number of **16** in group

ITINERARY

Rome (1 night), Sorrento (4 nights),
Capri (2 nights), Naples (7 nights),
Rome (1 night)

INCLUSIONS

15 nights' accommodation in centrally located 4-star hotels. All breakfasts, 2 lunches and 6 dinners. Services of an expert tour leader and an experienced tour manager throughout. Best available tickets to **1** performance. Ferry Sorrento-Capri-Naples. All ground transport, entrance fees and tipping.



DETAILED ITINERARY

Start & Finish

The tour starts at 4.00pm on Friday 5 April, at the Hilton Doubletree Hotel, Rome. The tour ends after breakfast on Saturday 20 April, at the Hilton Doubletree Hotel, Rome.

Included meals are indicated with B, L, D.

Friday 5 April

Rome Arrival

We meet in the foyer of our hotel late afternoon. A guided orientation tour of the neighbourhood, close to the Colosseum and Forum, will be followed by a welcome dinner in a local restaurant. Overnight Rome (D)

Saturday 6 April

Sperlonga and Sorrento

Departing Rome we travel to Sorrento via the seaside town of Sperlonga, enjoying our first glimpses of the spectacular coastline for which the region is famous. We'll stop for lunch, enjoying Sperlonga's lovely beach, before exploring the vestiges of the villa ostensibly built for the emperor Tiberius and nearby grotto in which an impressive collection of ancient sculptures were discovered in 1957. Continuing to Sorrento we check into our hotel and enjoy a relaxed orientation walk before dinner in the hotel. Overnight Sorrento (B, L, D)

Sunday 7 April

Stabiae, Oplontis and Boscoreale

Wealthy citizens escaped the bustle of ancient Rome for the shores of the Bay of Naples, building magnificent holiday villas designed for pleasure and relaxation. After a talk in our hotel we follow in their footsteps, making our way along the southern side of the bay. Our first stop is Stabiae, largely buried by ash following the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 CE. Here we tour the ruins of the cliff-top Villa San Marco and Villa Ariadne before continuing to Oplontis and the imperial 'Villa of Poppea', a large complex with superb frescoes. We also explore the small 'farm villa' at Boscoreale - a fascinating archaeological example of how a working farm operated in Roman times. We meet this evening for dinner in a local restaurant. Overnight Sorrento (B, D)

Monday 8 April

The Amalfi Coast

This morning our coach takes us along the Amalfi Coast, famous for its steep limestone cliffs, exceptional views, and the glamorous resort towns which grew out of small fishing villages as society and prospects for locals changed. We stop in chic Positano for a photo opportunity in this most picturesque of towns before heading on to Amalfi, a lovely counterpoint to showy Positano, where the medieval main square is dominated by the Moorish-influenced cathedral with its elegant mosaic

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

Archaeological treasures of the Bay of Naples

Appreciate the expert guidance of archaeologist Dr Estelle Lazer at the key ancient sites of Pompeii, Herculaneum and other well preserved but lesser-known sites in the region.

Villas and Palaces

Imagine the sumptuous lifestyles of the Roman nobility in Stabiae, Oplontis and the sunken city of Baia and enjoy the splendour of the Royal Palace and Gardens at Caserta.

Capri and Ischia

Enjoy the relaxed lifestyle and magnificent views from the picturesque volcanic islands of Capri and Ischia, lying at either end of the Bay.

National Archaeological Museum of Naples

Explore the wealth of paintings, mosaics and sculptures from Pompeii, Herculaneum and the Bay of Naples at Italy's most important archaeological museum in the heart of Naples.

Caravaggio and the Capodimonte

Discover the region's greatest art, including Caravaggio's final Neapolitan masterpieces and the extraordinary collection at the Capodimonte, one of Italy's finest art galleries.



Villa of Poppea, Oplontis



Streets of Pompeii



Island of Capri

façade. There is time for a relaxed lunch before we join our ferry back to Sorrento, enjoying the coastal landscape and views from a different perspective. After a talk in our hotel the evening is at leisure. Overnight Sorrento (B)

Tuesday 9 April Pompeii

Today we travel to Pompeii, where we spend the day exploring the private and public buildings which have captured the imagination of visitors since the ruins were discovered in the 18th century. Tour leader Dr Estelle Lazer's extensive experience and expertise on the site makes this an exceptional visit. Pompeii offers a huge variety of ruins, and there will be some free time for individual exploration as well as the structured visit which includes the Villa of the Mysteries, a large villa on the town's edge with superb frescoes. Returning to Sorrento the evening is at leisure. Overnight Sorrento (B)

Wednesday 10 April Capri

Departing Sorrento this morning we take a ferry to the beautiful island of Capri, lying just off the southern end of the Bay. After checking into our hotel we head out on a guided walking tour, exploring the vestiges of ancient villas amongst their chic modern counterparts and enjoying the spectacular views from an island which has been a favoured holiday destination since the time of the Roman Republic. Our extended time here offers a respite from the day-trippers and in the late afternoon we enjoy a quiet stroll through the town and dinner in a local restaurant. Overnight Capri (B, D)

Thursday 11 April Anacapri

Today we take a local bus to the town of Anacapri on the western end of the island where we visit the Villa San Michele and its impressive gardens, built in the early 20th century on the ruins of an old chapel by Swedish doctor Axel Munthe. Physician to the Swedish Royal Family, Munthe hosted the Crown Princess (later Queen) Victoria at the villa and today we enjoy the same panoramic views they did, across Capri and the Sorrento peninsula to Mount Vesuvius. We also visit the church of San Michele with its impressive majolica floor and, weather dependent, take the chairlift to the summit of Monte Solaro, the highest point on Capri. This afternoon there is an optional boat tour to the Blue Grotto. Overnight Capri (B)

Friday 12 April Naples

Departing Capri this morning we join the ferry for Naples. On arrival, we'll drop our bags and freshen up at our hotel before beginning our exploration of this fascinating, historic and frequently misunderstood city. The elegant hilltop Vomero district is our first stop. Here we explore the 14th-century Carthusian monastery of San Martino and nearby medieval Castel Saint Elmo, enjoying exceptional views across the city. After lunch in Vomero our coach drops us at the Gallerie d'Italia, a new space displaying the Neapolitan art collection of one of Italy's biggest banks, including important works by Caravaggio, the controversial and influential "bad boy" of the Baroque. The short walk back to the hotel is the ideal way to familiarise ourselves with the neighbourhood. Dinner tonight is in a local restaurant. Overnight Naples (B, L, D)



The Seven Works of Mercy



Royal Palace of Caserta



Island of Ischia

Saturday 13 April **Naples old and new**

This morning we take a panoramic tour of the city, ending at the church of San Giovanni a Carbonara, a Gothic treasure trove of marble sculpture, 15th-century frescoes, and majolica mosaic floors. From here our guided walking tour takes us through the historical centre of Naples and across centuries of art and architecture, visiting the Madre Museum of Contemporary Art; the fascinating multilayered architecture of the cathedral; Cavallini's 14th-century frescoes at San Domenico Maggiore and Pio Monte della Misericordia where we see Caravaggio's complex and powerful masterpiece, *The Seven Works of Mercy*. After time for lunch, we return to the hotel via the medieval Castel Nuovo enjoying an aperitivo en route at the renowned Caffè Gambrinus. The evening is at leisure. Overnight Naples (B)

Sunday 14 April **Herculaneum**

Though smaller and less visited than Pompeii, the seaside site at Herculaneum is in many ways better preserved, with mosaics, paintings and even wooden architecture and furniture still in situ. After a talk this morning we tour the site, which features large seafront houses as well as baths, shops, and other public buildings. Returning to Naples we visit the National Archaeological Museum where the extraordinary collection contains a wealth of paintings, mosaics, sculptures and everyday objects from Pompeii, Herculaneum, and other sites around the Bay of Naples. This evening, program permitting, we attend a performance at the beautiful Teatro San Carlo, the oldest opera house in Europe. Overnight Naples (B)

Monday 15 April **The Royal Palace of Caserta**

Today we head north, enjoying a day at the Royal Palace of Caserta, a monumental complex built by leading architect Luigi Vanvitelli in the mid-18th century for the Bourbon King Charles III. Described by the UNESCO World Heritage Convention as "an eloquent expression of the Enlightenment in material form" the palace, a triumph of Italian Baroque, integrates beautifully into the vast park in which it is set. Combining manicured terraces and natural woodland with pools, fountains, and cascades, the park is one of the last great gardens of Europe. After a guided visit of the palace, the afternoon is free to enjoy the gardens. The evening is at leisure. Overnight Naples (B)

Tuesday 16 April **Capodimonte and the Catacombs**

A day of exceptional art awaits us, beginning at the Cappella Sansevero and Giuseppe Sanmartino's awe-inspiring *Veiled Christ*, an artistic tour-de-force carved in marble. We admire the beautiful vault frescoes in Sant'Anna dei Lombardi, painted by Renaissance all-rounder Giorgio Vasari in 1545, and the fine 18th-century majolica cloisters in the monastery of Santa Chiara before heading to the Palace of Capodimonte in the hills above Naples. Once a royal hunting lodge, the palace is today a world-class art gallery, containing paintings by Raphael, Titian, El Greco and Botticelli. Our day ends at the oldest and most famous of Naples' ancient catacombs, the Catacomba di San Gennaro, decorated with 2nd-century Christian frescoes and 5th-century mosaics. The evening is at leisure. Overnight Naples (B)

HOTELS

Hotels have been selected principally for their central location. All hotels are a comfortable 4-star standard.

Rome, Hilton Doubletree by Hilton

(2 nights)

www.hilton.com/en

Sorrento, Grand Hotel Riviera

(4 nights)

www.hotelriviera.com

Capri, Hotel Gatto Bianco

(2 nights)

www.gattobianco-capri.com/en

Naples, Grand Hotel Santa Lucia

(7 nights)

www.santalucia.it/en

WEATHER

Mild temperatures and some cooler mornings can be expected throughout the journey. Expect average temperatures of 20-22°C during the day and minimums of 10-14°C at night. We recommend you bring a light waterproof jacket and an umbrella and be prepared for possible windy conditions.

FITNESS REQUIREMENTS

Grade Two

This tour is designed for people who lead active lives. You should be able to:

- comfortably participate in up to five hours of physical activity per day, including walking at an easy to regular pace, sometimes on uneven terrain
- keep up with the group at all times
- negotiate challenging archaeological sites, which are often uneven and unstable
- climbing stairs and bridges
- stand for one to two hours in galleries and museums at a time
- get on and off a coach, train, ferry or boat with steep stairs unassisted
- move your luggage a short distance if required

Wednesday 17 April

Ischia

The Phoenician/Greek settlement of Pitheculusae was an important trading port in ancient times but modern Ischia is better known today for its fine beaches, thermal spas and restaurants. Today we take the ferry to this picturesque volcanic island, lying at the northern end of the bay. We visit the 15th-century Castello Aragonese, a fortified city on its own rocky outcrop connected to Ischia by a causeway. In the afternoon we explore the archaeological museum and gardens of the 18th-century Villa Arbusto, located near the site of the ancient acropolis of Pitheculusae. Returning to Naples the evening is at leisure. Overnight Naples (B)

Thursday 18 April

Pozzuoli, Baia, Misenum and Cumae

Today we explore the lesser known but no less remarkable archaeological sites at the northern tip of the bay. We begin in Pozzuoli where the impressive amphitheatre, commissioned by the emperor Vespasian in the first century CE, is still largely intact. A glass-bottom boat tour reveals the subterranean splendour of the wealthy seaside enclave at nearby Baia, which sank beneath the waves as a result of seismic activity in the 4th century CE, and at the ancient port site of Misenum we see the Piscina Mirabilis, an enormous cistern hewn out of rock. Our day concludes at the site of the ancient Greek colony in Cumae, where we visit the Cave of the Sybil and the acropolis with its temples dedicated to Apollo and Jupiter. Returning to Naples the evening is at leisure. Overnight Naples (B)

Friday 19 April

Roman Villas in Tivoli

We depart Naples today, returning to Rome via two exceptional villas at Tivoli. Emperor Hadrian's magnificent residential complex at the foot of the Tiburtine Hills incorporated architectural elements from ancient Greece, Rome, and Egypt and, though the site fell into disrepair after the fall of the empire, the ruins remain a fascinating testament to Hadrian's refined taste and love of luxury. After lunch we continue to the Villa d'Este where we enjoy the pagan fantasy world of grottoes, fountains and cascades designed by classical scholar Pirro Ligoria to complement the villa of thwarted papal candidate Ippolito d'Este in the 16th century. We arrive in Rome by late afternoon and check into our hotel. This evening we meet for a farewell meal in a fine local restaurant. Overnight Rome (B, D)

Saturday 20 April

Rome Departure

Our tour ends after breakfast this morning. Transfers to Rome airport are available. (B)

ENQUIRIES & BOOKINGS

For further information or to secure a place, please contact **Sharon Williams** on 9235 0023 (Sydney) or 1800 639 699 (outside Sydney) or email: sharon@academytravel.com.au

