



## Amalfi

Breathtaking views, history, traditions, and modern comforts, are all represented in Amalfitan life today, giving its visitors the chance to spend a relaxing, and exciting holiday at the same time.

Amalfi was founded by the Romans in the fourth century AD. After winning independence from the Byzantine Empire in 893, Amalfi was the first of the four Marine Republics and its trade with

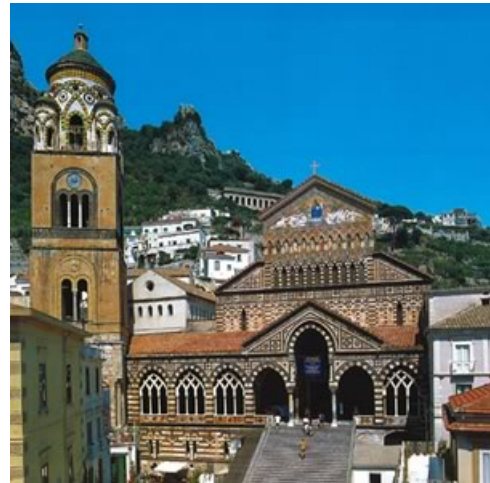
the Orient was the basis of its wealth. Amalfi had a powerful and agile fleet with berths in the mayor ports of the Mediterranean Sea. Amalfi was able to establish itself as a maritime power in the tenth and eleventh centuries.

Only two galleries separated by 10 pillars remain of the ancient stone arsenal, where the hulls of the battle-galleys were built. The rest of the works and the ancient Amalfi port were destroyed after an earthquake below sea level, caused by tidal waves in November 1343.

### Sight seeing:

- **The Cathedral** – At the top of a magnificent flight of stairs, the Cathedral overlooks the Piazza Duomo, the heart of Amalfi and the centre of all activity. The building dates back to 1000, the interior is in late baroque style with three naves divided by 20 columns.

The gold caisson ceiling is adorned with four large paintings by Andrea d'Aste depicting the flagellation of Saint Andrew, the miracle of Manna, the crucifixion of Saint Andrew and the Saint on the cross. From the left hand nave there is a flight of stairs which leads to the crypt, which was built around 1203 on behalf of Cardinal Pietro Capuano, who, on the 18th May 1208, had Saint Andrew's remains brought to the crypt from Constantinople on the return of the IV Crusade  
Visiting times: 9.00 am – 6.00 pm



- **Chiostro del Paradiso** – Next to the cathedral, built during the 13th century in arabic style, preciousy preserves ancient sarcophagi, carved marbles and fine mosaics.

Visiting times: 9.00 am – 6.00 pm

- **Antichi Arsenali of the Maritime Republic of Amalfi** –

Dating back to the 9th century, the ancient arsenals are a precious testimony to the glorious maritime past of Amalfi. One of the 22 pointed arch arcades that used to open out towards the sea, only 12 remain  
Visiting times: 10.00 am – 8.00 pm

- **Museo della carta** – Via delle Cartiere, 23. Founded by Nicola Milano, famous descendant of a family from Amalfi with a long tradition of making paper. This museum is based on the old paper mill dating back to either the 16th century or the 13th. Visit the museum and see how hand made paper is produced and see the old water mills which are run by the river Canneto. There are still old tools for making paper by hand as wood hammer moved by a hydraulic wheel, which beat and crush the linen, cotton and hemp previously collected in the hard stone basins.

Visiting times: 10.00 am – 6.00 pm

- **Grotta dello Smeraldo (Emerald grotto)** – it is located in the enchanting bay of Conca dei Marini – 4 km far from Amalfi, accessible from the main road (SS 163) by lift, steps or by sea. Originally the grotto lay above sea level then a long and slow natural process of water dripping created different sizes of stalactites and stalagmites. Inside, at 4 metres under sea level, you can find the Vietri pottery statues representing the nativity scene.

Visiting times: 9.00 am – 4.00 pm

## Atrani

During the Sea Republic time Atrani was a residential quarter of the aristocracy and the nobility. Ancient chronicles relate that the people of Amalfi and Atrani together used to elect both the Doge and the Bishop. Surrounded by a strong fortification Atrani provided a solid backup defence to Amalfi.

Many sanctuaries and monasteries were built around this small area and high above, on the western slope of Mount Aureo, stands the imposing tuff stone walkway of the Amalfi cemetery built in 1816 on the site of the former Benedictine convent, which had been constructed around the year 980 by Duke Mansone I and dedicated to San Lorenzo del Piano.

The layout of the village with its small houses built one on top of the other with narrow little lanes and steep flights of steps, gives Atrani a unique character.

From Piazzale Spiaggia the road winds its way up through the town to Piazza Umberto I where there is a stone fountain dating from 1927. To the north stands a wide flight of steps opening onto a small 19th century atrium which leads to the churches of the Immacolata and San Salvatore de Birecto, whose origins date from the 10th century and played a fundamental role as a Palatine chapel in which the crowing ceremonies of the Dukes of Amalfi once took place.



The Collegiate Church of Santa Maria Maddalena



The Church of San Salvatore



## Ravello

Ravello was founded by a colony of Patrician noblemen during the sixth century AD, it was populated, round about the year one thousand, by a group of nobles from the Maritime Republic of Amalfi who had rebelled against the authority of the Doge. The rebels made a good choice when choosing the site in which to build their sanctuary as it sits nearly 500 metres above sea level on a dramatic cliff side. The city quickly prospered,

thanks in particular to the flourishing wool-spinning mill, known in olden times as the "Celendra".

Its economic and political decline began in the Norman period and became dramatic in the course of the seventeenth century, having lost its prosperous economy, Ravello had all the rest, an unrivalled position from the naturalistic point of view and architectural and artistic marvels built during the centuries of splendour.

Ravello is one of the most famous tourist areas in the world, and is full of marvels, such as its houses built in Arabic/Sicilian style, the prestigious twelfth-century Cathedral, the spectacular thirteenth-century Villa Rufolo, the magnificent lookout at Villa Cimbrone.

## Sight Seeing

### Villa Cimbrone

Villa Cimbrone's site, like its name, is ancient: it was a large stretch of land belonging to the noble Accongiagioco family, on which stood a vast rustic farmhouse. It was subsequently bought by the Fusco family who kept it for many centuries until financial difficulties forced a descendent to sell it. In 1904 it became the property of a noble Englishman, Lord Ernest William Becket, who constructed a building of incredible beauty, mixing styles and epochs, ethnic and cultural elements. It is famous for the Terrace of the Infinite, situated at the end of the long way it boasts one of the most spectacular views in the world. In the grounds one can admire the Crypt, with its many arches of octagonal columns; the Tea Room, an original rectangular-shaped room; the Cloister, architecturally influenced by Villa Rufolo and the cloister of the Convent San Francesco. In the lower part of the gardens, is the Temple of Bacco and the Grotto of Eva.



### Duomo

The building dates from the 11th century, but its bronze doors are the work of Barisano da Trani and were crafted in 1179. Its campanile (bell tower) was erected in the 13th century. One of its major treasures is the pulpit of the Rufolo family, decorated with intricate mosaics and supported by spiral columns resting on the backs of half a dozen white marble lions. This is the work of Nicoló di Bartolomeo da Foggia in 1272. To the left of the altar is the Chapel of San Pantaleone (Cappella di San Pantaleone), the patron saint of Ravello to whom the cathedral is dedicated. His "unleakable" blood is preserved in a cracked vessel. The saint was beheaded at Nicomedia on July 27, A.D. 290. Ravello holds a festival on that day every year, the saint's blood is said to liquefy.

### Villa Rufolo

Built in the 13th century by the powerful Rufolo family, the Villa Rufolo has been home to several popes, Scottish botanist Francis Nevile Reid, creator of the villas enchanting gardens in 1853, and German composer Wagner who in 1880 found the inspiration when strolling through the gardens the setting for the second act of the famous opera Parsifal. The garden today are used to stage the world famous Ravello classical music festival which takes place from June to September.

## Positano

According to legend, Positano was founded by the God Neptune when he fell in love with the nymph Pasitea. The town is built on charming terraces on the steep rocks of the Monte Comune, and around a small, well-protected bay. Positano has earned its worldwide reputation not only because of the beauty of its surroundings, but also because of the shops that produce made-to-measure clothing in the distinctive "Positano style".

Positano is popular for its beachwear and casual clothing. At Via del Brigantino, located near the beach, you'll find the perfect swimsuit to sunbath or actually use in the water. Umberto Caro on Via Pasitia sells locally-made pottery with the rich, vibrant colors you expect to find in such a rich vibrant community as Positano. Angelo Fusco is a jewelry shop in town that specializes in cameos and coral jewelry. You'll find Angelo's in Positano's main square.

One of the first places you'll want to visit in Positano is the Church of Santa Maria Assunta, conveniently located in the center of town. Perhaps that is because, since its beginning, it has been a center of activity for the faithful residents of Positano. The architecture of the church is typical of the area, with its domes and stucco work. One of its pieces of artwork is a Byzantine panel made of wood. The panel depicts the Virgin Mother and Child and has an interesting legend associated with it, from which the town of Positano supposedly got its name. The Santa Maria Maddelina is a church in nearby Atrani where the village dates from about the tenth century. One of the interesting attractions of Positano, is its stairs, a town full of stairs, the higher you go the more spectacular the view.



## Praiano

The wide territory of Praiano occupies that part of the Amalfi Coast between Positano and Conca dei Marini, on both sides of the peninsula of Capo Sottile . The name derives from the Latin Pelagianum (open sea) that changed in the Middle Ages to Plagianum and finally to Praiano.

At the age of the Maritime Republic of Amalfi, Praiano was the chosen summer residence for the Dogi (Dukes of Amalfi), thanks to the relaxing and discrete ambience, far from the usual touristy routes it is still loved by elites.

In the centre of the higher part of the town, in a beautiful panoramic position, there is the main church of Praiano, built in 1588 it was dedicated to the patron saint San Luca Evangelista (St. Luke the Evangelist). The Church was rebuilt in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Notable are the majolica pavement, belonging to the end of 18th century.

The lower part of Praiano stretches up to the Marina di Praia, the only landing point of the ancient Plagianum, with a narrow beach between two rocky walls, at the mouth of the rough ravine of Praia. On the headland there is the Guard Tower of medieval origin, built to watch the sea and alarm the town when the ships of the Saracen pirates were on the approach. Nowadays the *Marina di Praia* is an delightful sea resort, which is beautiful to visit by boat enabling you to visit the stunning grottos of **Suppraiano** and of the **Africana** which plays host to the popular night club of the same name.

