

## The Bay of Naples

Welcome to the Bay of Naples, where the skyline is dominated by one of Europe's best well known active volcanoes.



## Day 1 – Phlegrean Fields

Today we depart from the UK on our flight to Naples. On arrival we start with an excursion to the geographical sites of the Phlegrean Fields. This is a large super-volcano area which has been in the news recently, comprising an 8 mile wide caldera located on the western outskirts of Naples and the Gulf of Pozzuoli. You will be able to see cinder cones, tuff rings and calderas that have been periodically active over the past 39,000 years. The ground here has risen by almost 40cm in the past 10 years which is attributed to the rising pressure of the vast underground magma chamber, leading scientists to conclude that an eruption is becoming more likely. There are abundant signs of active magma chambers in the forms of solfataras, warm spring and gas emissions. In the afternoon we will transfer to the hilltop town of Sorrento.

Though it hasn't actually erupted spectacularly since AD 1198, the parched, alien landscape of bubbling mud pits and fumaroles furiously venting 160°C steam filled with the stench of sulphur remind visitors that here molten lava still runs just under the ground's surface.



## Day 2 – Naples, the Underground City and Herculaneum



Travel to the city of Naples where we will visit the fascinating Underground City, a labyrinth of tunnels and subterranean rooms which in some cases date back thousands of years. The tunnels were originally excavated by the ancient Greeks as a waterstorage system and you can still see the reservoirs holding water. In the twentieth century they were used as bomb shelters during WW2. We will also have a driving tour through the centre of Naples. From here we will travel on to Herculaneum, the ancient city buried in mud by the Pompeii eruption of AD79. Though initial spared from the first devastating effects it was struck by a succession of pyroclastic flows which buried the town under 20m of volcanic mud and ash. Approximately one third of the town has been excavated revealing a high standard of preservation of Roman life.

## Day 3 – Vesuvius and Pompeii



We will start the day with a hike to the summit of Mt Vesuvius where when standing at the crater's edge we may see steaming vents, reminding us that this is an active volcano just taking a nap. The last eruption was in 1944. A hike around the crater will reveal some spectacular views of Naples and the Bay.

After lunch we will take a trip round the old Roman city of Pompeii and experience how life was back in AD79. Taken unawares by the eruption, the population of the towns and villages that circled the volcano could only respond with panic. The skeletons found in Pompeii and Herculaneum give us an insight to the total panic and uncertainty experienced. The eruption lasted for more than 24 hours from its start on the morning of 24 August.

Those who fled at once, unburdened by possessions, had a chance of survival, for the rain of ash that fell for several hours was not necessarily lethal. It was not until around midnight that the first pyroclastic surges and flows occurred, meaning certain death for the people of the region. (A pyroclastic flow is a ground-hugging avalanche of hot ash, pumice, rock fragments and volcanic gas, which rushes down the side of a volcano as fast as 100 km/hour or more.)

The hundreds of people sheltering in the vaulted cellars at Herculaneum met their end swiftly - from the intense heat of the first surge that reached the city. Further surges reached Pompeii, suffocating those who had survived the initial fall of 3m (10ft) of ash. The surges that followed smashed flat the upper floors of houses, and left the bodies encased in blankets of ash.

#### Day 4 - Capri



Today will be a full day visit to Capri, we will take the hydrofoil from Sorrento Port for the 30-minute crossing. Unlike the other islands in the area Capri is comprised of Limestone and used to be joined to mainland Italy, but over many thousands of years the link has been eroded by the sea. Tourism is the main economy of the island and with little naturally occurring water on the island an undersea aqueduct was completed in 1978. We will take time to explore the island including the world famous sea stacks and natural arch

#### Day 5 – Amalfi Coast



Today we will explore the Amalfi coastline. This will be done via minibus due to the nature of the winding roads on Italy's most scenic stretch of coastline. Small towns such as Positano, Praiano, Ravello and Amalfi will be visited along our way. We will experience some of Italy's most fashionable towns with their maze of alleys and steps along with small shops displaying typical local products and crafts from the region. Our route back to Sorrento will take us back over the mountains in time for dinner.

#### Day 6- Sorrento and Fly Home



In the morning we will have some free time in Sorrento to explore the town and buy any last minute souvenirs. Time permitting we will then travel back to the slopes of Mt Vesuvius where we will visit a winery and vineyard. The soil here is formed from volcanic ash and ground down pieces of lava. The ash contains valuable minerals whilst the lava acts as a sponge to retain the small amount of rain that falls here so consequently the vineyard requires no artificial irrigation. From here we will travel to the airport to home.

