

VITORITALY[®]
Italy with Italians

INCREDIBLE SOUTHERN ITALY IN 12 DAYS

**Castelli Romani, Amalfi Coast, Paestum, Matera,
Puglia and Naples**

Mr Mario ROSSI

March 27th – April 7th, 2024

DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY



From Rome to the coast of Amalfi, magically suspended between the sky and the sea, and Matera and its unique sets. Then Puglia, on the footprints of an endless procession of conquerors and cultures, stamped in stone, gold and marble. Seas of olives, olive-green seas and food the equal to any in Italy. And finally, lively Naples!

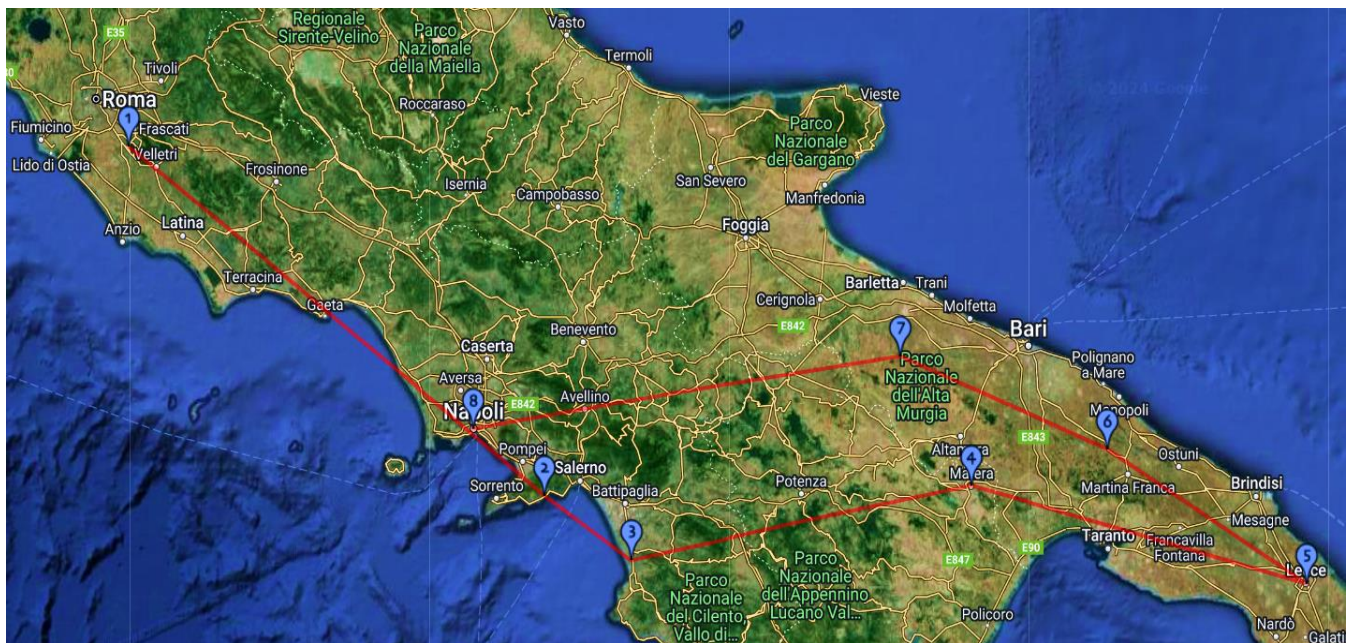
Around Southern Italy, at the discovery of the culture and spirit of the country.

TOUR SUMMARY

- Group Size: 4 adults
- Tour Start Date: March 27th, 2024
- Tour End Date: April 7th, 2024
- Duration: 12 days + 11 nights
- Tour starts and ends in Rome

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

- The Amalfi Coast, where divas are at home
- Capri, a love story with sea and sky
- Paestum, when Greeks ruled Italy
- Matera, the city of stones
- Alberobello, living in Trulliland
- Lecce, the “Florence of the South”
- Castel del Monte, the fortress of mystery
- Naples, pizza time



ITINERARY SUMMARY

DAY	ACTIVITIES INCLUDED IN THE PROGRAM
Day 1 Wed, March 27 th Rome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Arrival at Rome FCO Airport - Pick-up and transfer by private minivan to your accommodation in Rome <i>Overnight in Rome city centre</i>
Day 2 Thu, March 28 th Castelli Romani	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Full-day excursion by private minivan Castello Romani – Visit of a Frascati wine cellar with tastings - Drop off at your accommodation on the Amalfi Coast <i>Overnight on the Amalfi Coast</i>
Day 3 Fri, March 29 th Capri	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Round trip by public ferry to Capri Harbour - Full-day excursion to Capri Island with an <u>Authorised Tourist Guide</u> with private transportation on the island - Funicular Tickets – Optional Admission to Augustus Gardens and Villa San Michele <i>Overnight on the Amalfi Coast</i>

DAY	ACTIVITIES INCLUDED IN THE PROGRAM
Day 4 Sat, March 30 th Amalfi Coast	- Full-day excursion by private minivan of the Amalfi Coast: Amalfi & Positano – Free time <i>Overnight on the Amalfi Coast</i>
Day 5 Sun, March 31 st Sorrento	- Half-day excursion by private minivan to Sorrento – Free time <i>Overnight on the Amalfi Coast</i>
Day 6 Mon, April 1 st Paestum	- Transfer by private minivan to your accommodation in Fasano area – Stopover in Paestum - 1.5-hour private walking tour of Paestum Archeological Area with an <u>Authorised Tourist Guide</u> - Admission to Paestum Archeological Area – Lunch at Buffalo Mozzarella Farm with tastings <i>Overnight in Fasano area</i>
Day 7 Tue, April 2 nd Matera	- Full-day excursion by private minivan to Matera - 3-hour private walking tour of Matera city centre with an <u>Authorised Tourist Guide</u> - Optional Admission to Church and cave house in Matera <i>Overnight in Fasano area</i>
Day 8 Wed, April 3 rd Lecce	- Full-day excursion by private minivan to Lecce - 3-hour private walking tour of Lecce with an <u>Authorised Tourist Guide</u> - Visit of a local wine cellar with tastings <i>Overnight in Fasano area</i>
Day 9 Thu, April 4 th Martinafranca & Alberobello	- Full-day excursion by private minivan to Martinafranca and Alberobello - Visit of a local olive oil mill with tastings <i>Overnight in Fasano area</i>
Day 10 Fri, April 5 th Castel del Monte	- Transfer by private minivan to your accommodation in Naples – Stopover in Castel del Monte - 1.5-hour private walking tour of Castel del Monte with an <u>Authorised Tourist Guide</u> <i>Overnight in Naples city centre</i>
Day 11 Sat, April 6 th Naples	- 3-hour private walking tour of Naples city centre with an <u>Authorised Tourist Guide</u> - Optional Admission to Cappella San Severo - Transfer by private minivan to Naples Railway Station + Transfer by high-speed train 1 st class to Rome Railway Station + Transfer by private minivan to your accommodation in Rome <i>Overnight in Rome city centre</i>
Day 12 Sun, April 7 th	- Transfer by private minivan to Rome FCO Airport - Departure from Rome FCO Airport

Please note the following:

- This itinerary is fully private and can be modified as you wish
- The tour is self-guided and subject to direction and control by VITOR
- All Guides and Drivers are English-speaking
- Our services include also:
 - **in case of emergency, full assistance 24 hours/day**
 - **a list of recommended restaurants and deli shops along the itinerary**
- Our Tour Managers are at your disposal for a phone or a Zoom call, please set the best time for you at <https://calendly.com/marcello-vitor>

TOUR MAIN FEATURES

CASTELLI ROMANI



Benvenuti in Italia, and welcome to Castelli Romani!

The area south of Rome is known as “Castelli Romani” (Roman Castles). The entire area originated from a series of volcanic eruptions that shook an original crater, creating some lakes. The area, a traditional destination for the out-of-town excursions of the Romans, is dotted with several pretty hill towns famous for their ancient history and highly regarded wine: **Castelgandolfo**,

the summer residence of the pope, **Rocca di Papa** and **Grottaferrata**, known for their culture and gastronomic delicacies, **Frascati**, famous for its breathtaking views and its sweet and refreshing white wine named after the city, are only some of them.

THE AMALFI COAST

Costiera Amalfitana is Italy's most scenic stretch of coastline, a landscape of pastel-coloured villages terraced into hillsides, steep panoramic roads, luxuriant gardens and enchanting vistas over turquoise waters and green mountains. Considered by UNESCO "an outstanding example of a Mediterranean landscape, with exceptional cultural and natural scenic values," the coast has been a World Heritage Site since 1997. You may go from town to town at the discovery of Amalfi, Positano, and Ravello, three of the most beautiful villages in Southern Italy, world-famous for their charm and colourful architecture.



Amalfi typically has Mediterranean architecture with lanes and characteristic white houses piled one upon the other. In the Middle Ages, it was one of Italy's four powerful maritime republics (with Venice, Pisa, and Genoa). All sea trade in the Mediterranean was

once governed by the 12th century “Tavole Amalfitane”, one of the world's oldest maritime codes. A must-see in Amalfi is the **Duomo di Sant'Andrea**, fronted by an intricately patterned façade, redone in the 19th century. Founded in the 9th century, the Cathedral's subsequent alterations have spared its principal glory, the main portal's 11th-century Byzantine bronze doors. Next to the church lies the **Chiostro del Paradiso** (1268), or Cloister of Paradise, whose serious Romanesque tone is animated by the Arab elements in its sinuous columns. To escape the bustle of Amalfi, let's take the famous walk along the “**Valle dei Mulini**”, a steep-sided valley dotted with ruined watermills – “i mulini” - once used to make paper, an industry for which Amalfi was, and still is, famous.

Positano sits in a splendid panoramic position on one of the most beautiful stretches of coastline. Its enchanting town centre of delightful pastel-coloured houses surrounds the parish **church of Santa Maria Assunta**; its streets are lined with quaint, colourful shops, and its numerous beaches are world-famous.

Ravello is more elevated than the other pearls of the Amalfi Coast, boasting exceptional views of the coast and its marvellous villas and gardens. French novelist André Gide said they are “closer to the sky than the sea”. Here, you may visit **Villa Rufolo**, built in the 13th century, which hosted popes and kings, and Richard Wagner, who composed part of his opera Parsifal here in 1880. Views from its idyllic gardens are magnificent!

A trip to **Cetara** is an absolute must. The village is renowned for a particular gourmet speciality, "*colatura di acciughe*" (anchovy sauce), produced according to an ancient procedure for generations. Spaghetti with colatura di alici is the area's typical recipe, a dish you will remember forever. Discover the secrets of the liquid gold of the Coast in the [article](#) in our BLOG.

At dinner, don't miss *Spaghetti with clams in olive oil and garlic sauce* or *Seafood Risotto* with a glass of excellent *Greco di Tufo* white wine.

CAPRI

With a steep, jagged coast and encircled by the famous "**Faraglioni**" (sea stacks), enormous and uniquely shaped boulders, and by numerous caves that tell of evocative plays of light, Capri offers a landscape of wild beauty sculpted by wind, sea and the hand of man. The most famous of these caves is the "**Grotta Azzurra**" (Blue Grotto), closely connected to the history of tourism in Capri.

Its discovery by the ancient Romans is hinted at by countless archaeological finds - e.g. **Villa Jovis**, whose construction was commissioned by Emperor Tiberius.



The island continues to be both a legend and a favourite destination for travellers, intellectuals and the international jet-set - "performing" at any given time in the legendary "**Piazzetta**", the real-time theatre of the island's 'Dolce Vita'. Beyond sea and nature in all their charm, Capri offers many chances for excellent shopping: elegant boutiques and artisans' studios selling "Made in Italy" items and typical products alternate along the characteristic sidestreets and alleyways. Moreover, the flavoured local food is tied to the island's maritime and peasant traditions.

The island is associated with the myth of the Sirens due to the presence of the homonymous rock of the Sirens, characterizing the bay of **Marina Piccola**. Servius's commentary on the 5th song of

Virgil's Aeneid is among the sources that feed the legend. The poet narrates half-bird and half-woman creatures that would have lived in Capreae and who, with their songs, bewitched the sailors and sent them against the rocks. On the other hand, the physical conformation of the island, which is made of coves, caves, and precipices, makes it perfect as a refuge for these mythological beings.

SORRENTO

An expanse of land that juts out towards Capri and the rest of the Mediterranean, the Sorrentine Coast lies just south of the Bay of Naples. It is a sequence of cliffs and overhangs dominating the sea - with a few small bays along the way - blessed with a view of the enchanting deep blue; sloping terraces cultivated with oranges, vines, olives and, most of all, lemons, come down to the sea. Tourists lucky enough to pass through in springtime will be pleasantly overwhelmed with their perfume, while visitors year-round can enjoy the divine consequences of the sour citrus once picked: after all, life gave this Coast lemon, and the people made Limoncello!

Man has been spellbound by this spot from the beginning, initiating with the ancient



Greeks – they thought that these waters were the home of sirens (legend has it that in Antiquity, Surrentum, as it was known, came about as a site of cult worship dedicated to this mythological mer-people). Later, the Romans built their splendid villas, roads, ports and thermal spas; certain remnants are still visible here. Inhabited during the Middle Ages, and despite eventual incursions by the Saracens, the Sorrentine and Amalfi Coasts were prime stops for those 18th-century European men of means on their traditional Grand Tour.

PAESTUM

Located in the southeast of the Gulf of Salerno, Paestum is an archaeological site of extreme importance, recognised by UNESCO as part of the World Cultural Heritage. Built by the Greeks around the 7th century BC with the name of Poseidon, the city was later occupied by Romans, who made it a thriving colony, giving it its current name.

In addition to its cultural value, the importance of Paestum is linked to the excellent conservation of properties, starting from its walls, built by the Greeks and later strengthened by the Romans. Inside them, three majestic temples on a green plain reflect a different light depending on the hours and seasons. Many writers, poets and artists like Goethe, Shelley, Canova and Piranesi were fascinated by this sight, which later inspired them for their works.



These large buildings are a remarkable example of Doric-style architecture. **The Temple of Hera**, dating to the 6th century BC, is the most ancient building. The **Temple of Neptune** (5th century BC) is a massive construction made of travertine marble in a warm golden colour that varies at different times of the day. **The Temple of Ceres** (6th century BC), dedicated to the goddess Athena, was transformed into a church back in medieval times.

Besides its temples, Paestum is famous also for a gourmet speciality that you should

taste on site: its “mozzarella di bufala”. Made with the best buffalo milk from the area, *“mozzarella di bufala”* is closely linked to the land of Campania; the skill with which it is made reflects the love the cheesemakers put into creating this Italian excellence. You will visit a cheese factory in the area, to understand how it is produced and taste it freshly made, an unforgettable experience!

MATERA

Matera is one of the oldest cities in the world, whose territory holds evidence of human settlements from the Paleolithic and has been without interruption until today. Touring Matera is like experiencing a forgotten past - you feel like setting foot in a nativity scene when you visit this charming city in Lucania. It's no coincidence it's referred to as “the second Bethlehem” and was the setting for Mel Gibson's movie *“The Passion”* and the last James Bond, “No time to die”.

Matera is widely known as the city of the “**Sassi**”, the original urban nucleus, developed from the natural caves carved into the rock and subsequently modelled in increasingly complex structures.

In the 1950s, when the inhabitants who lived in the caves dug out of the mountain were forced to abandon those dwellings to settle in modern districts, no one would have ever thought that those grottos - the Sassi - would have become the symbol of a reborn city. UNESCO added the Sassi of Matera to its list of World Heritage Sites in 1993 as a whole and a millennial way of life to be preserved and handed down to our descendants. In fact, it was recognized as a model for living harmoniously with the environment while integrating with it and taking advantage of resources without disturbing the environment.

Geologists call it calcarenite, and ordinary folk refer to it as "tuff": it's the rock surrounding Matera that this land's master artisans learned to work with in ancient times. This brittle, adaptable material is abundant in the mountain that dominates the city, so it seemed only natural for the people from Matera to go up there and dig out that rock to build a home. The extracted material was processed to make the façade of the dwelling. After the first home, others were constructed until the network of houses, tunnels, and alleyways became that magical place called Sassi - a gigantic sculpture, a miracle of town planning!



In Matera, you'll discover one of the most beloved Italian breads. "Pane di Matera" is a bakery product for which only hard wheat semolina and sourdough are used. The characteristics to recognize the bread of Matera are the shapes, croissant or high bread, and a straw-yellow crumb. But besides bread, you'll not miss other local specialities such as the Caciocavallo cheese or the "Lucanica" sausage.

LECCE

Lying on a plain at the foot of the Salento Plateau is Lecce - the "**Florence of the South**" - one of the most exciting cities in the region for its architecture, typical of the 17th century.

Of ancient origins, the city experienced two distinct periods of prosperity: the Roman era and the Kingdom of Naples. Under both, the construction of buildings, monuments, and mansions increased significantly. These new structures were characterized by magnificent and rich ornamentations that earned this typical architecture the definition of "Leccese Baroque". The imaginative and meticulous sculpting work was facilitated by the fact that the local stone is



flexible and easy to inlay. A visit to Lecce can begin with **Piazza Duomo**, once used as a fortress and today considered the most elegant "salon" in the city. The grandeur of the Duomo, the work of Zimbalo, Cino and Penna, the five-story-tall bell tower, the Palazzo Vescovile (Bishop's Palace), and the Palazzo del Seminario (Seminary) mark the perimeter of the square, one of the monumental works that best represent the magnificence of Lecce's style.

Not far away, Piazza Sant'Oronzo narrates the city's entire history. The Roman period is visible in the ruins of the Amphitheatre that becomes the exceptional stage for theatrical performances in the summertime, and in part by the high Column - on which stands a bronze of St. Orontius, depicted in the act of blessing - erected in the 17th Century utilizing some of the Roman columns positioned on the Ancient Appian Way. **Palazzo del Seggio**, known as the "Seat," hosting important art exhibitions, and the Church of Santa Maria delle Grazie, with its interesting frescoes and works sculpted in wood, are the very symbols of the Apulian Renaissance.

Not to be missed is a visit to the Basilica di Santa Croce, where the inspiration of master masonry is visible in every part of the monumental façade that anticipates the beauty of its interior, a harmonious balance between the sobriety of the classical style and the splendour of Lecce's Baroque.

ALBEROBELLO

The **Trulli** are famous worldwide for their beauty and unique characteristics and represent one of the most extraordinary examples of Italian folk architecture. They were built in a particular historical period when the construction of stable dwellings was highly taxed; the region's inhabitants thus boasted a great capacity to adapt and an exceptional cleverness in coming up with the Trulli, temporary houses built with the local stone. From precariousness to stability - the process of transformation and recovery and the deference to the originality of the work earned the Trulli of Alberobello their recognition as a World Heritage Site.

In Alberobello, the capital of the Trulli, each Trullo has a different shape and size. Unique constructions are sometimes combined in a complex of communicating houses, while others are built on two levels. Most feature a grey cone-shaped roof, ending with a sphere or hemisphere shape. The interior, arranged as a single chamber, comprises niches for a fireplace, bed and furniture. The structure assures excellent indoor climate control: cool in summer and warm in winter!



Martina Franca is a charming baroque town 400 metres above sea level. The era of greatest splendour for this city was undoubtedly the 18th century, when the most important monuments and churches still dominating the historic centre were built. Baroque is the predominant style; it can be seen in many buildings, and in this city, it has taken on characteristic connotations that distinguish it from the other variations of this artistic and architectural current; in fact, we speak of "Martinese" Baroque.

After visiting Martina Franca, you'll taste its most famous product, olive oil, at a typical Masseria.

CASTEL DEL MONTE

Recognized as a World Heritage Site in 1996, Castel del Monte is a brilliant example of medieval architecture located on a hill in the Murge area. Commissioned by the eclectic and cultured Frederick II, Duke of Swabia, Emperor of the Sacred Roman Empire, the Castle is an exceptional work for the perfection of its forms and the fusion of cultural elements from different periods and places. The Lions at the monumental entrance are typical of Romanesque art, while the friezes that decorate some parts of the castle belie Classical inspiration. And the floor's design and materials are partly reminiscent of Islamic art.



The number 8 is the principal factor in the castle's plan: 8 sides of the castle, 8 rooms on the ground floor and first floor, arranged to form an octagon, and 8 the massive octagonal towers.

It is still unclear what led Frederick II to build this brilliant piece of architecture. An air of mystery surrounds it and is thus the fount of many legends and the charm of this unique place.

NAPOLI

Visiting Naples's historic centre means travelling through 20 centuries of history. The design of its streets, piazzas, churches, monuments, public buildings and castles constitute a jewel box of artistic and historical treasures of exceptional importance. Together, they earned their spot on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1995. Naples is a real treasure of art and history, of indelible signs from past dominations, each of which has contributed to this city's construction.

The city dominates the Gulf of Naples, expanding from the Sorrentine Peninsula to the volcanic area of the Phlegraean Fields. The most famous Neapolitan piazza is **Piazza del Plebiscito**, displaying the grand colonnade designed by Gioacchino Murat; in front of it is the magnificent **Royal Palace** designed by Domenico Fontana. Castel Nuovo's different but well-integrated architectural lines, otherwise known as "**Maschio Angioino**", evoke the double role of palace and fortress that this building played during the domination of the Anjou and Aragon families.



The churches in this city are countless. Over time, the Cathedral - erected upon pre-existing buildings, has undergone radical modifications to repair the damages caused by the earthquakes, especially on the outside. The interior hosts the famous "Cappella del Tesoro di San Gennaro" ("Chapel of St. Gennaro's Treasure"), with the two vials containing the Saint's blood.

And last but not least, you will not miss the **Sansevero Chapel**, commonly called "Pietatella" (Little Pietà). Here, you will be astonished by the "Cristo Velato" (Veiled Christ) by Giuseppe Sammartino, a masterpiece striking the eye with the extraordinary craftsmanship employed to sculpt the marble shroud over the body of Christ.

Naples is famous all over the world for its *pizza*. Yet, there is much more to this unique city's culinary traditions. You will be pleasantly surprised by the variety and richness of flavours and recipes you'll discover moving to the heart of the town, with its meandering streets and artisan shops, you will taste *authentic mozzarella* and try the best street food, such as *pizza frita* or *frittatina di maccheroni*. Of course, we couldn't do without a delicious *bruschetta with Colatura di alici* (a special dressing with origins dating back to Roman times).

The tour is over, but the memories of a fantastic journey will accompany you for a lifetime!

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