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# The Italy File

Kate and Ed's  
Amalfi Coast (and other) Adventures



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# The Backstory

Some people might call it a rut, we call it a groove.

The world is a big place. Italy is a big place. And yet we keep going back to the same places and doing the same things. Why? Because for us there is something magical about it. And because it's easy, and comforting, to not have to plan from scratch when, honestly, nothing was wrong the last time.

And yet, of course, many if not most of you who will read this like variety more than we do. But maybe you also like a little head start, some suggestions offered with heart and enthusiasm.

This is for you.

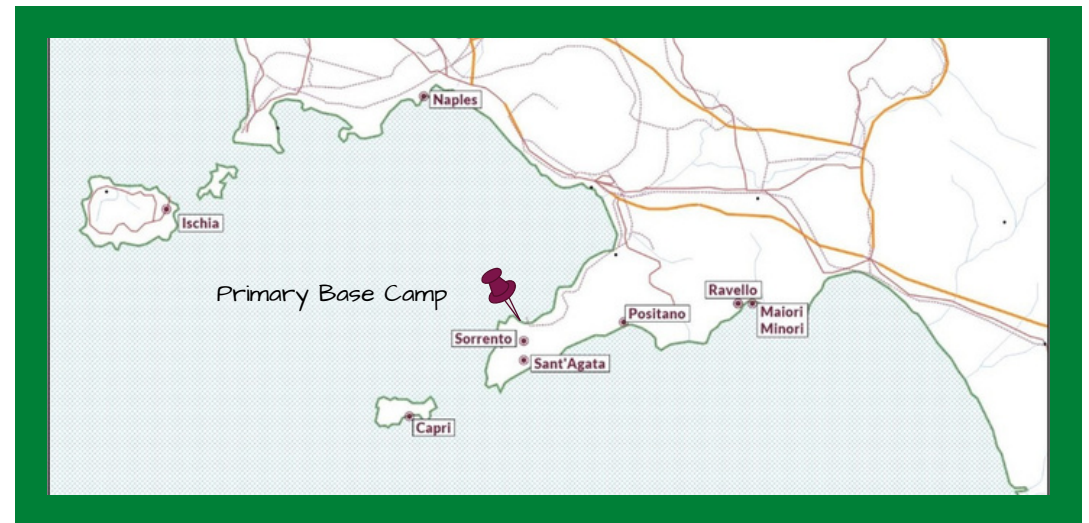


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## Base Camps

We've based ourselves in a few different places along the Amalfi Coast – my favorite is in **Central Sorrento**. It has the advantage of giving you enough to do right there without needing a car – restaurants, shopping, beach clubs. Even better, there is a ferry port that allows for day trips to Capri, Ischia, Amalfi, Positano, and Naples.

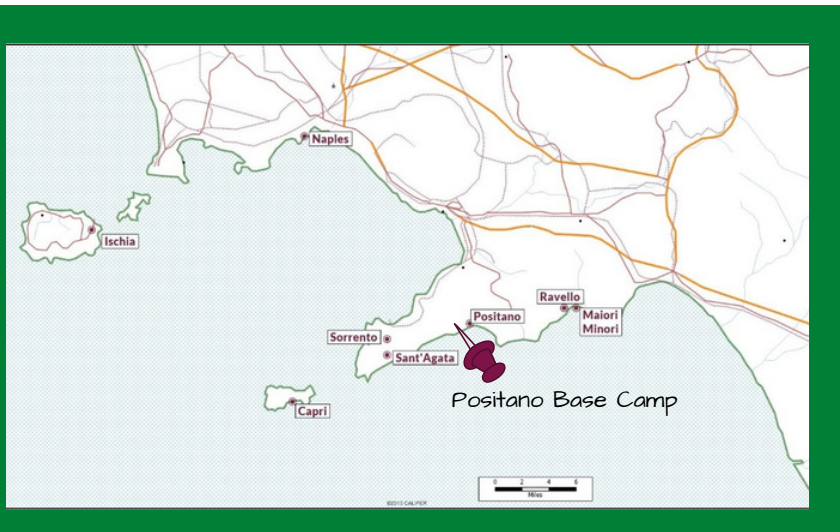
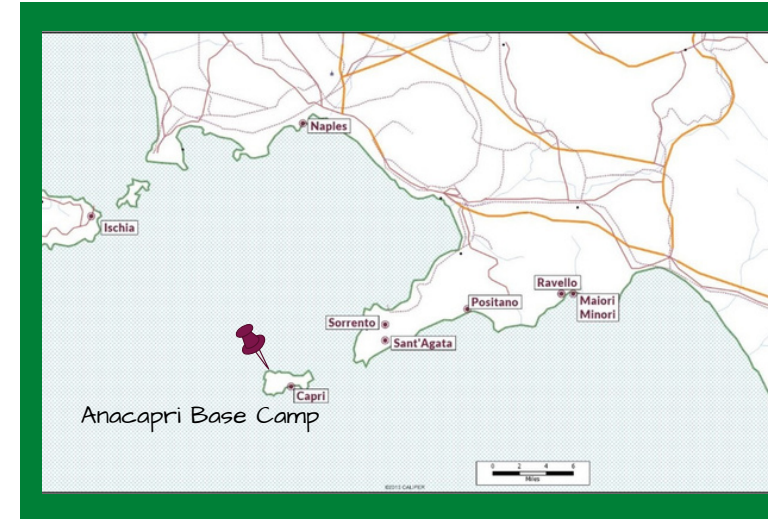
You'll read below that we also have stayed in a gated community south of Sorrento, near a smaller village. There are lots of options like this in those small villages, and they can be quiet and beautiful. Only challenge is that you need to plan to spend a lot more on transportation, either car of your own or more use of a car and driver.





## Base Camps

We've also spent a week at a time on the Island of Capri, in the quieter town of **Anacapri** near the peak of the island. We often don't leave the island at all, but it is possible to take day trips via ferry from there to Positano, Amalfi, Naples, and Sorrento. The only catch is that the last boats of the day back to Capri are pretty early, so it would be difficult to do an Italian style dinner on the mainland and get back to the island.



And once we based in **Positano**, part of a trip that also took us to Florence. The plus is that there is a beachfront and ferries that will get you to Amalfi, Capri, Sorrento and farther south to Salerno. It is also closer to the other cities on the southern part of the coast like Ravello, Maori, and Maiori. On the other hand, it is harder to find a place that is sheltered from the tourist hordes.

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## Day Trips

One of the advantages of basing in a place like Sorrento is the ability to easily arrange a number of great day trips. Organized tours are available to all of these places from the tour operators you can find online and in the central piazza. It's also easy to grab a ferry at the Sorrento port, or to contract with a local driver (see "Getting Around There")

Here's what you will find in this section

Pompeii

Amalfi

Naples

Positano

Capri

Ravello

Ischia

Maiori/Minori

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## Day Trips - Pompeii

Yes, you should probably go. A half day starting early in the morning, if you are based in Sorrento, is a good plan. So is a driver and a private guide.

Why are there no personal pictures of it? Well, we have never done it. There always seems to be something more appealing to do, like doing nothing. Or it seems too hot. Or it seems too crowded.

I'm done feeling bad about it.

## Day Trips - Naples

My reason to visit Naples is personal and quirky - there is an amazing warehouse-type fabric store where you can get beautiful apparel fabric yardage straight off the designer runways for, well, not cheap but better prices than anywhere else. I was lucky enough to have a local friend take me there (OK, she did tell me to leave all my jewelry at home)

For the rest of you, there are beautiful churches, galleries, museums and of course, pizza places



Fratelli D'Angelo

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## Day Trips - Capri

If you take a day trip to Capri, you'll have lots of company.

You might go from the port up to the village of Capri via funicular or taxi, walk around visiting all the shops down the small streets and alleys, then have a great lunch. Maybe buy some sandals.

Lots of people never leave the port and focus on seeing the Blue Grotto. That involves going out in a small boat, then transferring to a smaller boat where you lay flat while they shoot you into the Grotto. It's beautiful, but you aren't guaranteed to get in on any given day – depends on the weather and the waves. Still, there are some small rock beaches or boat tours if getting into the water is your goal.



If you are a walker or hiker, there are a number of options from easy to strenuous, after all this is really a big rock with beautiful gardens and amazing views. Look for the mega-yachts.

You can also go further up the island to Anacapri, which is a little quieter, and from there you can take a sort of ski-lift contraption to the very top.

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## Day Trips - Ischia

Ischia is a volcanic island about 30 minutes from Sorrento or Naples by ferry. Volcanic, so that means small earthquakes and landslides once in a while, but also thermal baths and pools.

Our experience is daytripping to a water spa called Il Terme di Poseidon, or just Poseidon. This is no kids water park. There is a beach, but the real feature is a series of indoor and outdoor pools, grottos, and showers with different temperatures and mineral content.

You pay one price to get through the gate (and rent a towel/locker/and mandatory swim cap if you need them), and then wander the grounds as you like. You will see all of humanity. If you see a woman in a one piece swimsuit (there aren't many) you can be pretty sure she is American – everyone else is much more comfortable in their own skin.

There is a café and a med-spa. Great massage and body treatments, but heads up – they are much less concerned with modesty than in the U.S. (meaning, strip down and don't expect much draping of the sheets, but nobody does anything inappropriate).



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## Day Trips - Amalfi

Amalfi is one of the larger towns along the coast, and I've never been there when it isn't crazy busy. Again, ferries, busses, or private drivers (can you guess by now what I do?). You will be dropped off along the seafront, then walk across the road to enter the town and immediately see the cathedral, the biggest tourist draw in town.

There are a number of hotels, shops, restaurants both in the center and scattered uphill from the port, as well as beach access (remember, these aren't soft sand beaches, though)

My favorite thing about Amalfi is that it is known as one of the earliest papermaking centers in Europe and there is a **papermaking museum** up the hill that still uses the old methods. It's kind of damp and a little smelly from the pulp, but fascinating. If that's more history and quirk than you need, a number of local shops carry Amalfi handmade paper in all kinds of forms.



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## Day Trips - Positano

Another beautiful seaside village accessible from Sorrento via ferry, or just about the right distance for a stop if you are being driven along the coast. If you drive yourself, good luck finding parking.

There's a beach with public access as well as beach clubs. There are winding streets lined with shops and restaurants - all uphill once you leave the port. It's that picturesque mix of pink and yellow and white houses, red, purple, and pink flowers, and blue sea and sky.

If you are looking for something more strenuous than shopping and eating, but just as rewarding and visually spectacular, you can hike Il Sentiero degli Dei (The Path of the Gods).

It takes about 3 hours and I can confidently say that although rated "easy" by a number of tour operators, it is not. The views are wonderful, but you will spend a fair amount of time looking at your feet.

You will need to get to the villages of Bommarano or Agerola, then hike to the village of Nocelle, which is above Positano - like 1,500 steps above, or tours are available with transportation from Sorrento and other spots along the coast



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## Day Trips - Ravello

Ravello is a really beautiful village in the hills above the coast south of Positano. There are busses from Amalfi, but we make it part of a day trip down the coast with a private driver.



The city is small and walkable, and is known for a music festival and for two public gardens – Villa Rufolo at left is the location of the summer music festival

Villa Cimbrone also has beautiful gardens and a price hotel on site. The highlight, though it is hard to choose one, is the Infinity Walk that has a tremendous view over the water and up and down the coast.

Note - it's a pretty good uphill walk to get to the gardens from the center of town.



Check out the "Where we Eat" section for one of my favorites

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## Day Trips - Maiori/Minori



Mainly, we have driven through on our way to lunch at Torre Normanna (see "where we eat"), but have stopped at one of the areas most famous pastry shops, Sal di Riso. I confess I haven't always craved Italian desserts, not that big a fan of tiramisu or panna cotta, but the offerings in this place are stunning and delicious.

We haven't explored these two towns very much - they are beaches of choice for visitors staying in the hills in Ravello.

They are also destinations in themselves with larger beaches and a quieter atmosphere than other places along the coast - very appealing if not as readily accessible to other areas.



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## Where we Stay

Not going to lie, we haven't gone budget when we have picked places to stay on the Amalfi Coast. We have based in villas as well as in hotels. If you are travelling with a group, a villa rental is a great way to get luxury at a great price. If you are travelling alone or in a pair, there are lots of hotels at lots of price points – great views and pools will push the price up, as will places that are walkable and limit your need for a car.

In this section, I'll share our homes away from home in Sorrento, in Massa Lubrense, in Anacapri, and in Positano

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## Where we Stay - Sorrento

### **Villa La Contessina in Sorrento City Center**

**<https://www.lacontessinasorrento.com/>**

I think we have stayed here four or five times at this point, but twice was enough to make us feel like we were coming back to see an old friend.

The villa is very central, but inside a beautiful walled garden that gives peace and privacy with all of the advantages of being within walking distance of the beach, the port, and every restaurants, bar, and store you could want.



There is a living/dining area, a full kitchen downstairs, and four en-suites upstairs reached by elevator or outside staircase to balconies. The real treasure is the outdoor patio and dining area on the first floor. In the garden there is another studio suite, and there's even laundry facilities.

Anastasia Delvecchio is the proprietress. She doesn't live on site, but is always there to greet you, often accompanied by her mother, and is available with great advice. She has become a friend and even spent a day with me driving into Naples in search of stores that carry fabrics straight off the designer runways. Book early, really early.

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## Where we Stay - Anacapri (Island of Capri)

**Hotel Caesar Augustus in Anacapri on the Island of Capri**

**<https://www.caesar-augustus.com/>**

Yes, another splurgy place, and so much to say about it. For a few of our trips, we combined on the mainland with a few days at this 50-60 room family owned property. In 2018 Francesco took over day-to-day management from his father, and is highly visible and interacting with guests every day.

There really aren't any cookie-cutter rooms. Our favorite is room 409, which is in a separate building called the Villa California and has a balcony overlooking the gardens. There are views down to the water and back to the mainland from everywhere, including the terrace that has live music most nights. We are pretty sure that they employ someone to walk around the grounds and spray perfume in the air on a daily basis.



Breakfast is included and is served indoors in a pretty room that overlooks the pool. Oh, that pool – it is a two tiered infinity style – just hang over the edge and stare out at the sea.

Lunch is al fresco, and there is a "fancy" dinner restaurant. Quite a lot of the food comes from the gardens on site, and the landscaping is gorgeous.

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## Where we Stay - Massa Lubrense

**Villa Mary in Massa Lubrense (used to be called Villa Maria)**

**<https://www.airbnb.com/rooms/22276430?>**

**guests=1&adults=1 or VRBO, AirBnB, etc.**

For this one you need a bunch of friends and a car, or at least a driver on call because this is a semi-private residential area south of Sorrento. You can't really walk to anything from this villa, except to the seawater community pool, which you reach by going down about 200 stone steps. Down isn't bad, up is rough. You can also get directly into the sea from the pool.

It is a four suite house with multiple decks, two living rooms, and a kitchen with its own pizza oven. The most recent photos make it look like there has been some updating to the baths and bedroom decor, though it remains a bit quirky. There's a nice indoor dining room but the best seat in the house is on the terrace outside the kitchen with beautiful plantings and a killer view of Capri.

When we stayed there, a housekeeper came every day with breakfast of yogurt, fruit, and pastries, and she was available for hire to do dinner in as well. Amazing parties were had



### Funny story

We first stayed at this villa in 2011. There are packed bookcases in several rooms. Since there were no safes in the room at the time and we didn't yet know how secure the area was, Ed wanted to stash some Euros. He picked a book called Scratch- clever, right – and put about 300-400 Euros in it.

You can imagine what happened next. Fast forward several years, and we are on a plane back to Italy. I will never know for sure when he remembered that he had left the money behind. Maybe he knew in 2011 and forgot, or just didn't want to fess up. In any case, that was the first time I had heard about it. So, of course, the first thing we did when we got back to "our room" was look for the book – and found a surprise windfall for our trip that was put to very good use.

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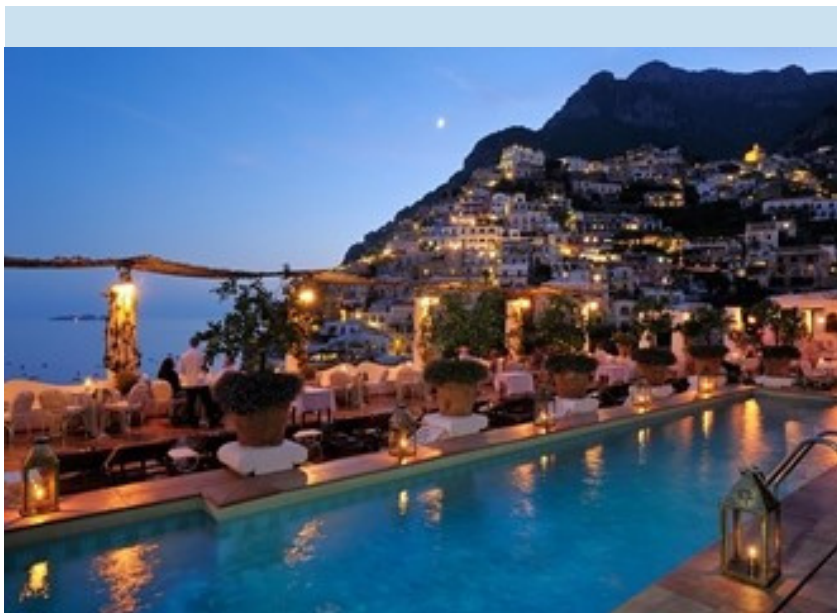
## Where we Stay - Positano

### Le Sirenuse Hotel in Positano

<https://sirenuse.it/en>

There are lots of hotels in Positano, which is laid out basically from the waterfront up the cliffs.

Le Sirenuse has been around for years, and is one of the small number that offers a private pool, which is a welcome alternative to the beaches – they can be crowded and are more rocky than sandy.



When we stayed there years ago, we used points, and I'm not sure that they are part of any program that accepts points anymore.

Like many hotels in this area, because of the topography they aren't really arranged with cookie-cutter rooms down long straight hallways. There are amazing (and amazingly expensive) suites. We had a run of house room with probably one of the worst views, but I can't say that it disappointed. One of my most vivid memories is hearing fireworks, laughing, and music until about 2 a.m. When you get married in Positano, it goes late and it goes loud.

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## Where we eat

For us, this is what it is all about – sitting around somewhere with a beautiful view, usually after a great meal, and talking about where to go next. We aren't that great at giving advice about sites to see, but I feel like we have really nailed it on dining experiences. And most of them really give you a full experience; great food is a given and to go with it you get jaw-dropping views, amazing personalities, or both. Don't get me wrong, we have stopped in to more than our share of more budget-friendly trattorias and gelaterias, but these are our regular spots and our splurges.

You are going to eat a lot of tomato, a lot of fish, a lot of lemon flavored stuff.

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## Where we eat - Sorrento



### Antica Trattoria, Sorrento

<https://www.lanticatrattoria.com/>

This is a great place 5 minutes walk from the Villa La Contessina in the main shopping district of Sorrento. It's open lunch and dinner with indoor and outdoor seating, and kind of an in-between open-air terrace that is my favorite. It's a place that actually recognizes repeat visitors, even if you haven't been there for a year or two, or at least does a good imitation of remembering you. There is usually a complimentary glass of prosecco, and they often have a nice version of fried zucchini flowers. There are waiters that have been there forever, along with some younger ones including Antonino, a real charmer (didn't see him in 2023, but there are always fresh faces.)

### Il Buco, Sorrento

<http://www.ilbucoristorante.it/en/home>

This is a Michelin star restaurant right in the center of Sorrento. The indoor rooms have vaulted stone ceilings and there are also outside tables in kind of a raised walkway lined in stone. If you have a larger group, there is even a private room, which we booked when we had about ten people. Other meals we had there were great too, but with this one, we got the chef coming in to the room and basically saying that he was there to cook for us, and while the menu was terrific, he would make us whatever we wanted. Fancy but not formal, a special night out, not a cheap pizza date.





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## Where we eat - Sorrento

### Bagni Delfino, Sorrento

<https://www.ristoranteildelfinosorrento.com/>

Most of Sorrento is up above the shore, but this restaurant is down in the Marina Grand area, right over the water. Great seafood, no reservations on the web, but you can call ahead. It's really popular so if you happen to run in to a local driver or hotel concierge, let them run interference for you.

### Zio Sam, Piano di Sorrento

<http://www.ristoranteziosam.it/>

You get to this place by taking a cab, or something, up into the hills above Sorrento. You are rewarded for the trip by with another great view across the valley and a pizzeria/trattoria that feels like the family run place that it is. Zio Sam means Uncle Sam, and he is often there. Ask to visit the garden that is the source of a lot of the produce they use in the restaurant. This is one of those places where you can order from the menu, or you can just ask them to bring you food. It is one of the more budget friendly places we go to, if you don't include the cost of getting there.

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## Where we eat - Villages outside Sorrento

**Relais Blu, Massa Lubrense**

**<http://www.relaisblu.com/>**

Like so many beautiful places in this region, Relais Blu is located high up above the coastline. Your first impression will be of the white tiles, white walls, white furniture, all designed to set off the view of the sea. The action is out on the terrace – there is indoor dining, but why? Go the hour before sunset, park on one of the couches for a drink, then when the sun sets, move over to the tables for a lovely coursed meal. They don't seem to worry about turning tables more than once – no one will hurry you. I still can't forget a hot basil risotto I had there, with a small scoop of parmesan gelato right in the middle of the dish – sounds crazy, tastes amazing.



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## Where we eat - Villages outside Sorrento

**Don Alfonso 1890, Sant'Agata (closed 2023 for renovations, due to reopen 2024)**

**<https://www.donalfonso.com/>**

This is a Michelin Star restaurant in a small village run by a family that is highly visible. The second generation runs the kitchen, and Livia Iaccarino, the matriarch, stops by tables regularly to give you an enthusiastic run-down of where the food is sourced from (often their own farm) and to urge you to use the bread to mop up all the sauce on your plate. The food looks fancy, but you are meant to savor every bit as if you were at your grandmother's table. There is also a cooking school and hotel rooms.

If you get lucky, you may get invited to see their wine cellar in a building across the courtyard from the dining room. When you first go in, it looks pretty cool, old with stone walls, but as you go further you see a staircase dating from the 15th century that leads down to an old well at the bottom that is now used to age cheese. If you can't get there, check out their places in Toronto and St. Louis.





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## Where we eat - Positano

### **Chez Black, Positano**

**<http://www.chezblack.it/index-en.php>**

Chez Black is located along the beachfront walkway close to the ferry dock. It's always busy, but you can usually find a table without too much of a wait. It's pretty much a classic trattoria/pizzeria, but I guess the location is what makes it special for a pretty inexpensive meal in a pretty expensive town. Oh, and I had the best ever arancini there.

### **Cove dei Saraceni, Positano**

**<https://www.covodeisaraceni.it/restaurant-and-bar/>**

This is another option right on the waterfront in Positano. A little fancier, a little more expensive, with a nice covered patio. Not quite as busy and crowded as Chez Black, but both are a treat.

*If you've walked from the sea up to what feels like the "top" of Positano, stop for a drink, maybe at the Hotel Le Sireneuse or somewhere nearby with a view back down to the shore*



Cove Dei Saraceni

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## Where we eat - Positano

**Ristorante next2**

**<https://next2.it/en/>**

Haven't eaten here in years but I still remember it fondly. It's a little less obviously on the typical path that day-trippers walk, so maybe best for a nice quiet dinner if you happen to be staying in town and can enjoy that magical time when half the people who were there during the day have left.



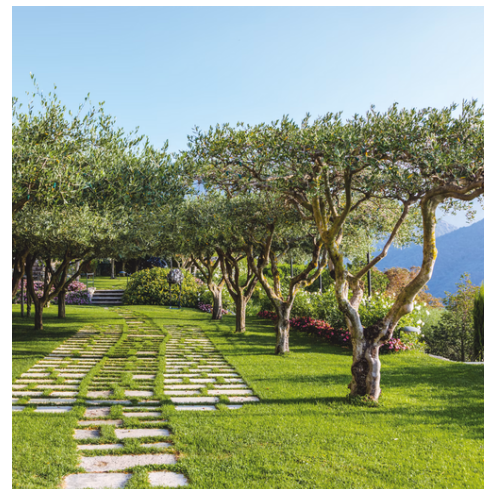
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## Where we eat - Ravello and Maiori

**Hotel Caruso, Caruso Grill, Ravello**

<https://www.belmond.com/hotels/europe/italy/amalfi-coast/belmond-hotel-caruso/dining>

Ravello is about 1,000 feet above sea level, so the garden restaurant for lunch has beautiful views across valleys and down to the water. Of course you pay for the view, but it is an elegant experience.



**Ristorante Torre Normanna, Maiori**

<http://www.ristorantetorrenormanna.com/>

This restaurant is located along the coast just down the hill from Ravello. We had pretty much settled in to our favorite places, but a local friend suggested this place and it would have been a shame to miss it. It is located in one of the 13th century watchtowers along the coast that used to be used to warn the residents to flee into the hills if attackers were spotted coming in from the sea.



The terrace dining room is perched directly over the crashing waves, and the food is great too!

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## Where we eat - Anacapri

### **Trattoria il Solitario, Anacapri**

**<http://www.ilsolitarioanacapri.com/>**

You have to keep an eye out for the sign for this place – the sign is right on one of the main streets just off the piazza, but then you follow a narrow walkway back before you get to the restaurant itself. There are indoor and outdoor rooms, and we usually choose the covered open-air terrace. No view here, unless you count the vines, but the food is good and well priced, and you avoid the bus tour groups.



### **Le Arcate, Anacapri**

**<https://www.caprifoodwine.com/it/ristorante>**

This is the pizzeria we go to when we are staying in Anacapri – it's just about a 10 minute walk uphill from our hotel into the village, just past the main square. It can get pretty busy because it accommodates the tour busses, but if you go for a later lunch you will find mostly locals.

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## Where we eat - Capri

D'Amore, Capri

[http://www.damorecapri.com/?portal\\_referer\\_id=1](http://www.damorecapri.com/?portal_referer_id=1)



D'Amore is about a 5 minute walk down one of the narrow streets from the Piazza Umberto.

Obviously there are a lot of options, including a number of places with better views, but when it is a really hot day, heading in to the shadier streets gives you a little relief, and the food is still great.

Usually you will see young women walking up and down the street in front of you very stylishly dress in linen ensembles – it takes a bit to realize they are models for some of the local stores.

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## When to go

Most places that cater to tourists on the Amalfi Coast and the nearby islands either shut down completely or cut back from about mid-October to mid-April, so it's important to check first.

This area gets pretty hot and humid, and it's hilly, and it's popular. August in particular gets a lot of European visitors (and did I mention it's hot?). We have gone in early June, July, August, and early September, and my favorite times were the second week in June and the second week in September. In 2023 we went the first and second weeks of June, and the weather was much milder - quite lovely. But nothing is guaranteed - we heard they had had a very very rainy month of May, and the mosquitos seemed to love it.

On that September trip, we had a tremendous thunderstorm the first day in Anacapri that blew up suddenly, and was over pretty quickly, but it took out the wi-fi for a couple of days. Even the four and five star hotels weren't immune - but maybe that is a luxury and not a problem.

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## Getting to There

You can book a flight to Naples, which will mean connecting somewhere. From there, you can take a train to some places farther south along the coast, or get to the port and take a ferry to Sorrento and some of the other towns, or book a car.

We tend to take a direct red-eye to Rome. From there, you could also connect to Naples via air, or go into central Rome and take a train to Naples, etc.

We've decided it's a worthwhile splurge to have a driver (see below) there to meet us at the Rome airport and take us directly to our place in Sorrento. It's about 2 ½ or 3 hours, you can sleep if you want, and even though it may cost something like 500€, the other options aren't free and they involve a lot of separate steps.

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## Getting Around There

Sure, it's tempting to see all of those Vespas and other scooters and think that would be the perfect way to drive down the Amalfi Coast – go for it if you like. I'm here to tell you, though, it is not for the faint of heart and just because they can load four family members and a week's worth of groceries on one and weave through streets and around curves with no apparent lanes or traffic signals doesn't mean you have it in you.

Many people will rent a car if you are planning to cover a lot of ground through Italy, but we have already revealed ourselves to be lazier than that. Plus, there is the drinking of the wine.

And so, for us, the answer has been a lovely guy named Giuseppe (Peppe) Esposito, who will either drive you himself or send one of his equally lovely drivers, like Alex Ruocco with a super comfortable Mercedes or Mercedes van, so no matter how big your crowd is, you're good as long as you plan ahead.

Here is how you reach him: **Giuseppe Esposito, Due Golfi Limousine**  
**<https://www.duegolfcarservice.it/>**

Send an email, give him a call, they are very responsive and speak great English, but be aware that they are very busy and so are all of their peers. Book early especially if you have a big crowd. We always map out our bigger requests, like airport transfers and day trips and trips for more than four several weeks before arrival - you can cancel, but you may not be able to get what you need at the last minute.

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## What to Buy

### WINE

Of course you can always buy wine in Italy, but I'm not going to lie, the whites in particular that are local to this region aren't great, in my opinion.

The local reds are better, I don't have any particular favorite, but really any region can give you some good affordable options. In Sorrento we go to The Corner Shop (<https://www.cornershopsorrento.com/en/>).

Giovanni is the son of the family who works there – you may also see his sister and father. It's not the place to go and ask for a 5€ bottle, but they will have great, reasonable recommendations so if you need a case to keep at the villa or just a bottle to drink in the park, they are really nice people.

The alcohol that this area is really known for is Limoncello. Every little café (and everyone you meet) has their own version. Often you will get a complementary shot at the restaurants and cafes you visit. It's fun to compare and see how such a simple recipe can taste a little different every time.

Speaking of Lemons, lemon patterned and flavored things are everywhere. Sorrento lemons are bigger and uglier than the ones in U.S. supermarkets, but they taste and smell amazing. Try lemon pasta and lemon sorbet and lemon soap . . . . .

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## What to Buy

### INLAID WOOD BOXES AND TRAYS

Sorrento has a history of very skilled woodworkers, specializing in inlay work. For mean, that means boxes, though there are lots of other examples of the craft available. The traditional work is usually in florals or landscape scenes, but my preference is for geometric patterns, and I usually can't resist just one more that we usually get at A. Gargiulo & Jannuzzi (<http://www.gargiulo-jannuzzi.it/main.htm>)

There are lots of smaller artisans, this is a really big store, but I like the designs they stock when I want to splurge, and they have a nice selection of giftable linens and jewelry and smaller more reasonable prices pieces as well.



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## What to Buy

### **LINEN, CASHMERE, SILK everything**

Scarves, ties, shirts, pants, dresses, for men, for women, for children, for the home at great prices.

Just check the labels for this and any other clothing to make sure you are getting the Italian stuff and not something from India (unless you love it, then who cares)

For me, the cashmere and cashmere/silk scarves and men's ties are especially good buys. My favorite place in Sorrento is Roseta at 16 Via Fuoro - ask the lovely lady to show you how to tie a shawl with style.

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## What to Buy

### SHOES

Sandals, available in lots of stalls and little shops and advertised as made to order are available everywhere for really reasonable prices (usually between about 30-75€ depending on the options you choose. There is everything from the simplest slides to highly bedazzled versions

Now, it turns out that made to order really can get you a sandal in your chosen style (from a menu) and color (from a menu), generally the same day. The only limitation seems to be that the available stock of soles only goes up to about a man's size 10 or 11, so the bigger guys like Ed are out of luck.

### PHARMACY STUFF, like insect repellent

This sounds crazy, but you can get things at any pharmacy in Italy that just work better than their American counterparts. Pharmacists are fantastic, describe your trouble and they will have ideas.

In 2023, we found amazing **insect repellent**, both in towlette (salvietta) and clothing/furniture patch (cerotta) form by **ALONTAN**. It's made with citronella, coriander, and geranium, and IT WORKS, trust me, bring some home.



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## Pit Stop - Rome

I know it sounds ridiculous, but for us Rome is just a pit stop on our trips to the Amalfi Coast.

We usually fly in on a red eye and head straight down the coast. Our return usually departs about 9 a.m. local time, so most often we arrive from the south the day before, usually about 1 p.m., giving us just enough time for lunch, one tourist thing, and dinner.

We've stayed at the Intercontinental at the Spanish Steps (now closed) and at the St. Regis (using points), but now we choose **Le Meridian Visconti** (it's a Marriott). The hotel has a nice rooftop bar where they often have live music and small plates.

It's in a mostly higher end residential neighborhood with good restaurants and you can walk pretty easily to the Vatican area and also across the river to the Piazza del Popolo.

We've been several times to dinner **La Buca di Ripetta**, just off the Piazza (<https://www.labucadiripetta.it/>) Yes, that is Vespa in the dining room.

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## Acknowledgements

We owe a serious debt of gratitude for all of our Italy experiences to our friend Peter Yannotta. Peter has been travelling to different parts of Italy for weeks at a time on and off for many years. In 2011 after experimenting with other places he had pretty much settled on the Sorrento area as the ideal base camp location. We were fortunate enough to get a call from him saying he had rented a villa for three weeks (see Villa Maria) and was offering us a room for the week of our choice. We were smart enough not to hesitate. He had already figured out so many things – drivers, restaurants, day trips, and over the years the hardest thing has been to make room to try new things because our list of places we want to return to is so appealing. We've been back with Peter, on our own, and with other friends, but he is always with us in spirit.

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