

# Campania



The most visited of Italy's southern regions, Campania is an ancient land of high drama and disorientating contrasts. From the seething streets of in-your-face Naples to the spectacular scenery of the Amalfi Coast, the landscape is as varied as it is compelling.

Central to everything is Naples, a sprawling love-it-or-hate-it city beautifully positioned on a bay. In the background Mt Vesuvius broods darkly, a reminder of the fate it so dramatically dealt Pompeii and Herculaneum 2000 years ago. Further down the coast, the magnificent temples at Paestum predate Roman times, testament to the region's past as a Greek colony.

Myth abounds in Campania. Icarus plunged to his death in the Campi Flegrei and Aeneas consulted the Cumaean Sibyl before entering Hades via Lago d'Averno (Lake Avernus). To the south, sirens lured sailors to their deaths in the sparkling waters off Sorrento.

A short ferry ride away, Capri is the most celebrated of Naples' three bay islands. A byword for Mediterranean chic, it attracts serious money and big numbers as day-trippers sail in year-round. Further north, Ischia trades on its spa waters and Procida preserves its authentic atmosphere. Campania's biggest crowd-puller is the Amalfi Coast, a vertical world of plunging cliffs, precarious villages and unforgettable views. Hidden to the world until 'discovered' in the mid-20th century, it's now one of Italy's most popular destinations. Inland, wooded mountains provide breathtaking hiking and an escape from the summer hordes.

To really get off the beaten track, though, head to the highlands of the Parco Nazionale del Cilento e Vallo di Diano, one of the region's wildest and least-explored areas.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Gawp at the views from **Monte Solaro** (p644), Capri's highest point
- Sit down to fresh seafood in **Cetara** (p670) and the world's best pizza in **Naples** (p632)
- Shiver at the sheer drama of **Pompeii** (p653) and fossilised **Herculaneum** (p651)
- Dive with the sirens off **Marina del Cantone** (p661) and walk with the gods on the **Amalfi Coast** (p666)
- Gape open-mouthed at the *Toro Farnese* in Naples' **Museo Archeologico Nazionale** (p625)
- Give your imagination a workout at **Paestum's** (p672) remarkable Greek temples
- Hang out with fishermen on multicoloured **Procida** (p649)



■ POPULATION: 5.8 MILLION

■ AREA: 13,595 SQ KM

# NAPLES

pop 984,300

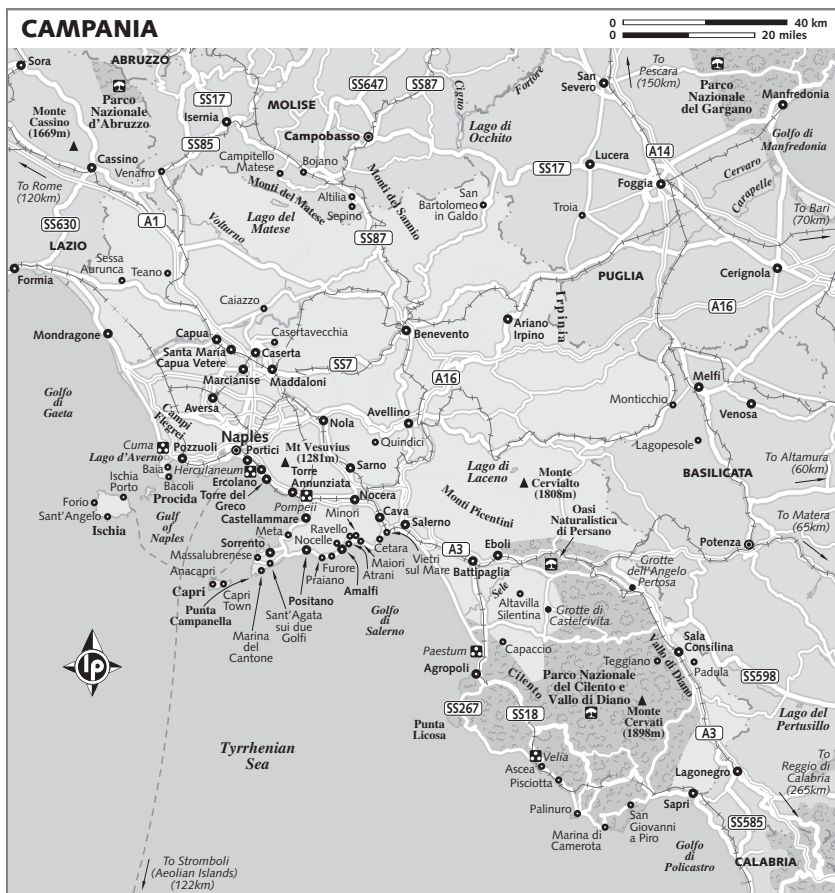
A lawless city where rules play second fiddle to unwritten codes and respect is won through cunning and a strong arm – Naples' reputation goes before it. And while there's truth in the stereotype, the reality is far more complex. Naples is anarchic and polluted; many of its historic *palazzi* are filthy and its *centro storico* (historic centre) is a dark warren of Dickensian streets. Yet it is also a city of majestic beauty, of regal palaces and baroque splendour, of world-renowned museums and modish lounge bars.

First stop for many is the Unesco-listed historic centre. It's here, under the washing

lines, that you'll find Naples' folkloric street life – cocky kids playing football in noisy piazzas, overloaded Vespas hurtling through cobble-d alleyways and forceful grannies bullying market vendors. Once the heart of Roman Neapolis, this claustrophobic area bristles with ancient churches, a medieval university and countless eateries and bars.

By the sea the cityscape opens up. Imperious palaces flank monumental squares as designer-clad shoppers peruse expensive boutiques and lunch in elegant cafés. This is Royal Naples, the Naples of the Bourbons that so impressed the 18th-century Grand Tourists.

Naples is one of the Mediterranean's great ports, and like many working ports it has a dark side. Petty crime is rife and the Neapolitan



Mafia, the Camorra, thrives on proceeds from the city's lucrative drugs trade and other illicit activities. A bloody turf war between rival clans in late 2004 did little to reassure observers that the city had truly cleaned up its act after the successful face-lift of the mid-1990s.

## HISTORY

Little is known of Naples' early days. According to legend, traders from Rhodes established the city on the island of Megaris (where Castel dell'Ovo, p627, now stands) in about 680 BC. Originally called Parthenope in honour of the siren whose body had earlier washed up there (she drowned herself after failing to seduce Ulysses), it was eventually incorporated into a new city, Neapolis, founded by Greeks from Cumae (Cuma) in 474 BC. However, within 150 years it was in Roman hands. Under the Romans it thrived, becoming something of a VIP resort, a favourite of emperors Pompey, Caesar and Tiberius.

After the fall of the Roman Empire, Naples became a duchy, originally under the Byzantines and later as an independent dukedom, until it was captured in 1139 by the Normans and absorbed into the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. The Normans, in turn, were replaced by the German Swabians, whose charismatic leader Frederick II gave the city many new institutions, including its university.

The Swabian period came to a violent end with the victory of Charles I of Anjou at the 1266 battle of Benevento. The Angevins did a lot for Naples, promoting art and culture, building Castel Nuovo (p626) and enlarging the port, but they were unable to stop the Spanish Aragon taking the city in 1442. Naples continued to prosper, though. Alfonso I of Aragon, in particular, introduced new laws and encouraged the arts and sciences.

In 1503 Naples was absorbed by Spain, which sent viceroys to rule as virtual dictators. Despite their heavy-handed rule, Naples flourished artistically and acquired much of its splendour. Indeed it continued to bloom when the Spanish Bourbons re-established Naples as the capital of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies in 1734. Aside from a Napoleonic interlude under Joachim Murat (1806–15), the Bourbons remained until unseated by Garibaldi and the Kingdom of Italy in 1860.

The city was heavily bombed in WWII and the effects can still be seen on many monuments around the city. Since the war

Naples has continued to suffer. Endemic corruption and the re-emergence of the Camorra have plagued much of the city's postwar resurrection, reaching a nadir in the 1980s after a severe earthquake in 1980.

Naples' recent history has brought better news. In the mid-1990s, the charismatic mayor Antonio Bassolino led a mass cleanup of the city. Dubbed the Neapolitan Renaissance, its highpoint came in 1994 when the city hosted the G7 summit. Bassolino has since been replaced by Naples' first woman mayor, Rosa Russo Jervolino, who has struggled to keep up the momentum. In the last few years the city has once again been making the headlines for all the wrong reasons. News of vicious Mafia wars and teenage stabbings are sadly back in fashion.

## ORIENTATION

Naples stretches along the waterfront and is divided into *quartieri* (districts). A convenient point of reference, Stazione Centrale (the main train station) forms the eastern flank of Piazza Garibaldi, Naples' chaotic transport hub. It's not an attractive place and the surrounding area is noisy, dirty and distinctly seedy.

From Piazza Garibaldi, busy Corso Umberto I runs down to Piazza Bovio, skirting the southern edge of the *centro storico*. The historic heart is centred on two parallel east-west roads: Via San Biagio dei Librai and its continuation Via Benedetto Croce (together these are known as Spaccanapoli); and, to the north, Via dei Tribunali. At the western end of Via dei Tribunali, Piazza Dante leads onto Via Toledo, which is Naples' main shopping strip. From the piazza, head north up Via Enrico Pessina (Via Toledo's continuation) to get to Parco di Capodimonte; go south for Piazza del Plebiscito, Naples' grandest square.

From Piazza Trieste e Trento, adjacent to Piazza del Plebiscito, Via San Carlo leads to Castel Nuovo and the traffic-laden Piazza del Municipio. On the seafront in front of the castle, Molo Beverello is the terminal for ferries to Capri, Ischia and Procida; next door, long-distance ferries sail to Sicily and beyond from the Stazione Marittima.

Follow the seafront west for the districts of Santa Lucia, Chiaia, Mergellina and Posillipo. Above it all sits Naples' upper-middle class in the relative calm of Vomero, a natural balcony with grand views.

## NAPLES

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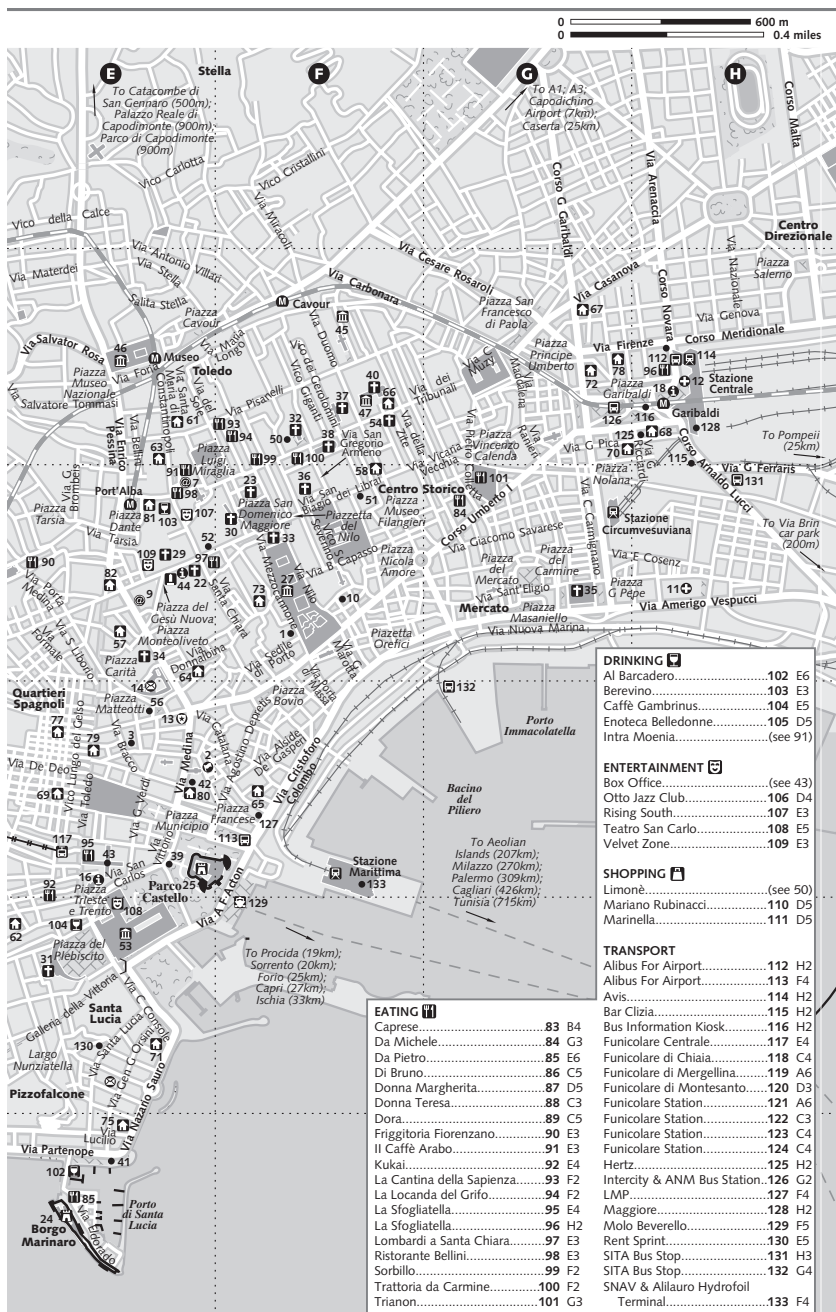
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**Stadio San Paolo (4.5km);  
Arenile di Bagnoli (5.5km);  
Pozzuoli (14km)**

**Mergellina**

**Porticciolo di Mergellina**

**To Procida (21km);  
Ischia (27km);  
Capri (32km)**



## INFORMATION

### Bookshops

**Feltrinelli Chiaia** (☎ 081 240 54 11; Piazza dei Martiri); **Toledo** (☎ 081 552 14 36; Via San Tommaso d'Aquino 15) Smart chain store with a good selection of maps as well as fiction, nonfiction and Lonely Planet titles in English.

### Emergency

**Police station** (☎ 081 794 11 11; Via Medina 75) Has an office for foreigners. To report a stolen car, call ☎ 081 794 14 35.

### Internet Access

**Internetbar** (☎ 081 29 52 37; Piazza Bellini 74; per hr €3; ☎ 9am-2am Mon-Sat, 8pm-2am Sun)

**Navig@ndo** (☎ 081 193 60 030; Via Santa Anna di Lombardi 28; per hr €2; ☎ 9.30am-8.30pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-2.30pm Sat)

**Zeudi Internet Point** (☎ 081 251 22 50; Via Chiaia 199c; per hr €3; ☎ 10am-1.30pm & 4.30-8pm Mon-Sat)

### Internet Resources

**Around Naples** ([www.napoli.com](http://www.napoli.com)) For listings and local news.

**I Naples** ([www.inaples.it](http://www.inaples.it)) The official tourist-board site.

**Neapolitan Way** ([www.napolinapoli.com](http://www.napolinapoli.com)) Offers practical advice and where-to information.

### Laundry

**Onda Blu** (☎ 081 563 49 96; Via Michele Zannotti 11b; 7kg wash & dry €7; ☎ 8am-8pm)

### Medical Services

**Ospedale Loreto-Mare** (☎ 081 20 10 33; Via Amerigo Vespucci 26)

**Pharmacy** (☎ 081 26 88 81; Stazione Centrale; ☎ 24hr) At the main train station.

### Post

**Post office** (☎ 081 790 47 54; Piazza Matteotti; ☎ 8.15am-7pm Mon-Sat)

### Tourist Information

Campania's **main tourist office** (☎ 081 40 53 11; [www.campaniafelix.it](http://www.campaniafelix.it) in Italian; Piazza dei Martiri 58; ☎ 9am-2pm Mon-Fri) is in Chiaia. More useful, however, are the information offices at the following locations:

**Mergellina train station** (☎ 081 761 21 02; ☎ 9am-7.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1.30pm Sat)

**Piazza del Gesù Nuovo 7** (☎ 081 552 33 28; ☎ 9am-1pm & 2-6pm Mon-Sat, 9am-1.30pm Sun)

**Stazione Centrale** (☎ 081 26 87 79; ☎ 9am-7.30pm Mon-Sat, 9am-1.30pm Sun)

### CAMPANIA ARTECARD

If you're planning to blitz the sights, the **Campania artecard** (☎ 800 60 06 01; [www.campaniartecard.it](http://www.campaniartecard.it)) is an excellent investment. A cumulative ticket that covers museum admission and transport, it comes in various forms. In Naples a **three-day ticket** (adult/18-25yr €13/8) gives free admission to two participating sites, a 50% discount on others and free transport in Naples and the Campi Flegrei. Other options range from €25 to €28 and cover sites as far afield as Pompeii and Paestum. The tickets can be bought at train stations, newsagents, participating museums, via the internet or through the call centre.

**Via San Carlo 9** (☎ 081 40 23 94; ☎ 9am-1pm & 2-6pm Mon-Sat, 9am-1.30pm Sun)

Ask for a copy of the useful bilingual brochure *Qui Napoli*.

### Travel Agencies

**CTS** (☎ 081 552 79 60; Via Mezzocannone 25) Student travel centre.

### DANGERS & ANNOYANCES

Naples has a certain reputation and, even though you're unlikely to encounter any Mafia shoot-outs, petty crime can indeed be a problem. Be especially vigilant for pick-pockets and scooter bandits, many of whom specifically target out-of-towners with expensive watches. Also, watch out for groups of dishevelled-looking women and children asking for money.

Car and motorcycle theft is rife, so think twice before bringing a vehicle into town and never leave anything in your car, particularly at night.

If shopping at the markets around Piazza Garibaldi, be wary of the digital-camera/mobile-phone scam. This involves you buying a top-of-the-range model only to get home and discover that you've actually bought a box with a brick in it.

Travellers should be careful about walking alone late at night, particularly near Stazione Centrale and Piazza Dante. The area west of Via Toledo and as far north as Piazza Carità, though safe enough during the day, can also be threatening after dark.

## SIGHTS

### Centro Storico

#### DUOMO & AROUND

Naples' spiritual centrepiece, the **Duomo** (☎ 081 44 90 97; Via Duomo; 🕒 8am-12.30pm & 4.30-7pm Mon-Sat, 8.30am-1pm & 5-7pm Sun) sits on the site of earlier churches, themselves preceded by a temple to the god Neptune. Begun by Charles I of Anjou in 1272 and consecrated in 1315, it was largely destroyed by an earthquake in 1456. Copious nips and tucks over the centuries, including the addition of a late-19th-century neo-Gothic façade, have created a melange of styles and influences.

Topping the huge central nave is a gilded coffered ceiling studded with late-Mannerist art. The high sections of the nave and the transept were decorated by Luca Giordano.

The 17th-century baroque **Cappella di San Gennaro** (Chapel of St Januarius; also known as the Chapel of the Treasury) features a fiery painting by Giuseppe Ribera and a bevy of silver busts and bronze statues. Above them, a heavenly dome glows with frescoes by Giovanni Lanfranco. Hidden away behind the altar is a 14th-century silver bust in which sits the skull of St Januarius and the two phials which hold his miraculous blood. Naples' patron saint was martyred at Pozzuoli in AD 305 and tradition holds that his blood liquefied in these phials when his body was transferred back to Naples. For information on the mysterious San Gennaro festival, see p629.

The next chapel eastwards contains an urn with the saint's bones, cupboards full of femurs, tibias and fibulas, and a stash of other grisly relics. Below the high altar is the Renaissance **Cappella Carafa**, also known as the Crypt of San Gennaro.

Halfway down the north aisle and beyond the 17th-century Basilica di Santa Restituta is the fascinating **archaeological zone** (admission €3; 🕒 9am-noon & 4.30-7pm Mon-Sat, 9am-1pm Sun). Tunnels burrow into the remains of the site's original Greek and Roman buildings. Here, too, is the **baptistry**, the oldest in Western Europe, with its remarkably fresh 4th-century mosaics.

At the Duomo's southern end, the **Museo del Tesoro di San Gennaro** (☎ 081 29 49 80; Via Duomo 149; admission incl multilingual audioguide €5.50; 🕒 9.30am-5pm Tue-Sat, 9.30am-2.30pm Sun) glimmers with gifts made to St Januarius over the centuries, from bronze busts and sumptuous paintings to silver ampullas and a gilded 18th-century sedan chair.

Opposite the cathedral is the entrance to the **Chiesa e Pinacoteca dei Girolamini** (☎ 081 44 91 39; 🕒 church varies, gallery 9.30am-12.30pm Mon-Sat), a rich baroque church with two façades. A small gallery in the adjoining 17th-century convent features excellent local art, including works by Luca Giordano and Battista Caracciolo.

A short walk to the north, **MADRE** (Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Donnaregina; ☎ 081 562 45 61; www.museomadre.it; Via Settembrini 79; admission €7; 🕒 10am-9pm Mon, Wed, Thu & Sun, 10am-midnight Fri & Sat) boasts the city's best collection of contemporary art. Highlights include Jeff Koons' uberkitsch *Wild Boy and Puppy*, Rebecca Horn's eerie *Spirits*, and a perspective-warping installation by Mumbai-born artist Amish Kapok.

#### SPACCANAPOLI

Following the path of the ancient Roman *decumanus inferior* (minor road), **Via San Biagio dei Librai** (becoming Via Benedetto Croce to the west and Via Vicaria Vecchia to the

#### NAPLES AS INSPIRATION

Naples has long provided inspiration for artists, writers, musicians and film-makers. Here, Neapolitan writer, director and producer Antonietta de Lillo explains why:

'There's an energy here that seems drawn from Mt Vesuvius itself. Like Caravaggio's chiaroscuro paintings, it's a place of extreme light and shadow. On one level there are the grand, sun-drenched castles of Sant'Elmo, Castel Nuovo and Castel dell'Ovo, and the sweeping views from Posillipo. But then there's the hidden Naples, the Naples of the Quartieri Spagnoli and La Sanità, where poverty and chaos sit side by side with grand baroque staircases, secret courtyards and forgotten *palazzi*.

'When I need inspiration (or just a break), I try to get away to Procida... With its fishermen and pastel-hued Arabesque houses, the island feels wilder and more authentic than neighbouring Ischia and Capri.'

east) is affectionately known as Spaccanapoli (Break Naples). Seen from above, it cuts right through the heart of the old city.

At its eastern end, the **Ospedale delle Bambole** (Dolls' Hospital; ☎ 339 587 2274; Via San Biagio dei Librai 81) is a city institution, a quirky shop full of dusty dolls' heads and assorted mannequins. Further down, the **Chiesa di Sant'Angelo a Nilo** (☎ 081 420 1222; entrance at Vico Donnaromita 15; ☎ 9am-1pm daily & 4-6pm Mon-Sat) is benignly presided over by a quartet of tubby gilt cherubs. A modest 14th-century church, it's of note for the monumental Renaissance tomb of Cardinal Brancaccio, to which Donatello contributed.

Down Via Mezzocannone, the **Centro Musei Scienze Naturali** (☎ 081 253 51 60; www.musei.unina.it; Via Mezzocannone 8; admission each museum €2.50, all 4 €4.50; ☎ 9am-1.30pm & 3-5pm Mon, 9am-1.30pm Tue-Sun Sep-Jul) is a university museum complex dedicated to the natural sciences. The Museo della Mineralogia, one of Italy's most important, features some 30,000 minerals, meteorites and quartz crystals collected from as far afield as Madagascar. The Museo della Zoologia displays a colourful collection of butterflies, birds and creepy insects, while across the courtyard the Museo della Antropologia boasts an eclectic collection of prehistoric relics. Dinosaur bones await at the Museo di Paleontologia.

Backing onto lively Piazza San Domenico Maggiore, the Gothic **Chiesa di San Domenico Maggiore** (☎ 081 557 32 04; Piazza San Domenico Maggiore 8a; ☎ 7.15am-noon & 5-7pm Mon-Sat, 9am-1pm & 5-7pm Sun) was completed in 1324 and much favoured by the Angevin nobility. The interior, a cross between baroque and 19th-century neo-Gothic, features some fine 14th-century frescoes by Pietro Cavallini and, in the sacristy, 45 coffins of Aragon princes and other nobles.

The simple exterior of the nearby **Cappella di San Severo** (☎ 081 551 84 70; Via de Sanctis 19; admission €6; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon-Sat, 10am-1.30pm Sun) belies the sumptuous sculpture inside. The centrepiece is *Cristo Velato* (Veiled Christ), Giuseppe Sanmartino's amazing depiction of Jesus covered by a veil so realistic that it's tempting to try and lift it. Also intriguing is Corradini's *Pudicizia* (Modesty), which is more erotic than modest. Downstairs are two meticulously preserved human arterial systems, testament to the bizarre obsession of Prince Raimondo de Sangro, the man who financed the chapel's 18th-century makeover.

From Piazza San Domenico Maggiore, Via Benedetto Croce continues west. The street is named after Italy's foremost 20th-century philosopher and historian, who lived and died in **Palazzo Filomarino**, a grand Renaissance building at No 12 just before Via San Sebastiano.

## PIAZZA DEL GESÙ NUOVO & AROUND

Marking the end of Via Benedetto Croce, **Piazza del Gesù Nuovo** is a popular student hang-out. At its centre soars the **Guglia dell'Immacolata**, an 18th-century baroque obelisk; to the north and east sit two of Naples' most famous churches.

Characterised by the pyramid-shaped ashlar stones on its façade, the **Chiesa del Gesù Nuovo** (☎ 081 551 86 13; Piazza del Gesù Nuovo; ☎ 6.45am-1pm & 4-7.30pm), dating back to the 16th century, is considered one of the city's greatest examples of Renaissance architecture. Its frescoed barrel-vaulted interior, the result of a 17th-century spruce-up, features works by a trio of Naples' big-name baroque artists – Cosimo Fanzago, Luca Giordano and Francesco Solimena.

To the east, the **Basilica di Santa Chiara** (☎ 081 552 62 09; Via Santa Chiara 49; ☎ 9am-1pm & 4.30-5.30pm Mon-Sat, 8am-1pm & 5.30-7.30pm Sun) is a hulking Gothic complex famous for its tiled cloisters. What you see today is not, however, the original 14th-century Angevin church but a brilliant re-creation – the original was all but destroyed by Allied bombing in August 1943. Within the **nuns' cloisters** (admission €4; ☎ 9.30am-6.30pm Mon-Sat, 9.30am-2.30pm Sun) is a long parapet entirely covered in decorative ceramic tiles, depicting landscapes and scenes from the nuns' lives.

From the square, Calata Trinità Maggiore leads down to Piazza Monteoliveto and the 15th-century **Chiesa di Sant'Anna dei Lombardi** (☎ 081 551 33 33; Piazza Monteoliveto; ☎ 8.30am-12.30pm Tue-Sat), worth a look for its fine Renaissance sculpture, including a superb terracotta *Pietà* (1492) by Guido Mazzoni.

## VIA DEI TRIBUNALI & AROUND

One block to the north of Spaccanapoli is Via dei Tribunali, the *decumanus maior* (main road) of ancient Neapolis. Connecting the two, **Via San Gregorio Armeno** is celebrated for its shops selling *presepi* (nativity scenes). See p635 for more. The street is also home to the 16th-century **Chiesa e Chiostro di San Gregorio Armeno** (☎ 081 420 63 85; Via San Gregorio Armeno



44; ☎ 9.30am-noon Mon-Sat, 9.30am-12.30pm Sun), a blast of jaw-dropping baroque. Highlights include sumptuous wood and papier-mâché choir stalls, a 17th-century marble altar and lavish frescoes by Paolo de Matteis and Luca Giordano.

A masterpiece of French Gothic architecture, the **Chiesa e Scavi di San Lorenzo Maggiore** (☎ 081 211 08 60; Via dei Tribunali 316; church/excavations free/€5; ☎ 9.30am-5.30pm Mon-Sat, 9.30am-1.30pm Sun) dates to the late 13th century. Inside, note the impressive 14th-century mosaic-covered tomb of Catherine of Austria. You can also pass through to the cloisters of the neighbouring convent, where the poet Petrarch stayed in 1345.

Beneath the complex are some remarkable *scavi* (excavations) of the original Graeco-Roman city. Stretching the length of the underground area is a 54m-long road lined with ancient bakeries, wineries and communal laundries.

Across Via dei Tribunali, a grand double staircase leads up to the **Chiesa di San Paolo Maggiore** (☎ 081 45 40 48; Piazza San Gaetano 76; ☎ 9am-1pm), whose huge gold-stuccoed interior features paintings by Massimo Stanzione and frescoes by Francesco Solimena.

To the east, the 17th-century **Pio Monte della Misericordia** (☎ 081 44 69 44; Via dei Tribunali 253; gallery admission €5; ☎ church 9am-2pm daily, gallery 9am-2pm Thu-Tue) is home to Caravaggio's masterpiece *Le sette opere di Misericordia* (The Seven Acts of Mercy), considered by many the single-most important painting in Naples.

### CHIESA DI SANTA MARIA DEL CARMINE

On the waterfront in Piazza del Carmine, the **Chiesa di Santa Maria del Carmine** (☎ 081 20 11 96; Piazza del Carmine; ☎ 6.30am-12.30pm Mon-Sat, 6.30am-2pm Sun) was the scene of the 1647 Neapolitan Revolution led by Masaniello. Each 16 July a fireworks display celebrates the festival of the Madonna by simulating the burning of the bell tower.

### Toledo

Naples' top museum, the magnificent **Museo Archeologico Nazionale** (☎ 081 442 21 49; Piazza Museo Nazionale 19; admission €6.50; ☎ 9am-7.30pm Wed-Mon) houses one of the world's most important collections of Graeco-Roman artefacts. It was originally a cavalry barracks and later the seat of the city's university. The museum was established by the Bourbon king Charles

VII in the late 18th century to house the rich collection of antiquities he had inherited from his mother, Elisabetta Farnese, as well as treasures that had been looted from Pompeii and Herculaneum. The museum also contains the Borgia collection of Etruscan and Egyptian relics.

To avoid getting lost in its rambling galleries (numbered in Roman numerals), invest €7.50 in the bilingual *Guida di Orientamento* or, to concentrate on the highlights, €4 for an audioguide in English.

The ground floor is given over to the **Farnese collection** of Greek and Roman sculpture. The two highlights are the colossal *Toro Farnese* (Farnese Bull) in Room XVI and gigantic *Ercole* (Hercules) in Room XI. Sculpted in the early 3rd century AD, the *Toro Farnese*, probably a Roman copy of a Greek original, depicts the death of Dirce, Queen of Thebes, who was tied to a bull and torn apart over rocks. The sculpture, carved from a single block, was discovered in Rome in 1545 and restored by Michelangelo before being shipped to Naples in 1787. *Ercole* was discovered in the same Roman excavations. He was found legless but the Bourbons had his original pins fitted when they turned up at a later dig.

On the mezzanine floor is a small but stunning collection of **mosaics**, mostly from Pompeii. Of the series taken from the Casa del Fauno at Pompeii, it's the awe-inspiring *La Battaglia di Alessandro Contro Dario* (The Battle of Alexander against Darius) that stands out. Measuring 20 sq metres, it's the best-known depiction of Alexander the Great in existence.

Beyond the mosaics is the **Gabinetto Segreto** (Secret Room), home to the museum's ancient porn. The climax, as it were, is an intriguing statue of Pan servicing a nanny goat, originally found in Herculaneum. The erotic paintings depicting sexual positions once served as a menu for brothel clients.

On the 1st floor, the vast **Sala Meridiana** contains the Farnese Atlante, a statue of Atlas carrying a globe on his shoulders. The rest of the floor is largely devoted to discoveries from Pompeii, Herculaneum, Stabiae and Cuma. Items range from huge murals and frescoes to a pair of gladiator helmets, household items, ceramics and glassware – even egg cups.

Set up in the basement is a small Egyptian collection.

## Vomero

Visible from all over the city, the stunning Certosa di San Martino is the one compelling reason to take the funicular (p637) up to Vomero (*vom-e-ro*), an area of spectacular views, new shops and smart restaurants.

## CERTOSA DI SAN MARTINO

The highpoint (quite literally) of Neapolitan baroque, this stunning charterhouse is home to the **Museo Nazionale di San Martino** (☎ 081 558 64 08; Piazzale San Martino 5; admission €6; ☎ 8.30am-7.30pm Thu-Tue). Founded as a Carthusian monastery in the 14th century, the Certosa owes most of its present look to face-lifts in the 16th and 17th centuries, the latter by baroque maestro Cosimo Fanzago. The church and the rooms that flank it contain a feast of frescoes and paintings by Naples' greatest 17th-century artists – Francesco Solimena, Massimo Stanzione, Giuseppe de Ribera and Battista Caracciolo.

Adjacent to the church, the elegant **Chiostro dei Procuratori** is the smaller of the monastery's two cloisters. A grand corridor on the left leads to the larger **Chiostro Grande**, considered one of Italy's finest. Originally designed by Giovanni Antonio Dosio in the late 16th century and added to by Fanzago, it's a sublime composition of white Tuscan-Doric porticoes, manicured gardens and marble statues. The skulls mounted on the balustrade were a light-hearted reminder to the monks of their own mortality.

To the north of the Chiostro Grande, the Sezione Presepiale, one of the many museum highlights, houses a whimsical collection of rare Neapolitan *presepi* carved in the 18th and 19th centuries.

The Quarto del Priore (Prior's Quarter) in the southern wing houses the bulk of the picture collection, as well as one of the museum's most famous pieces, Pietro Bernini's tender *La Vergine col Bambino e San Giovannino* (Madonna and Child with the Infant John the Baptist).

## CASTEL SANT'ELMO

Commanding spectacular views across the city, this star-shaped **castle** (☎ 081 578 40 30; Via Tito Angelini 20; admission €3; ☎ 9am-6.30pm Thu-Tue) was built by the Spanish in 1538. Impressive though it is, the austere castle has seen little real military action. It has, however, seen plenty of prisoners: a longtime jail, its dungeons were used as a military prison until

the 1970s. The admission times and price can vary when the castle is being used for exhibitions.

## VILLA FLORIDIANA

In a city decidedly short of green space, this public **park** (Via Domenico Cimarosa; admission free; ☎ 9am-1hr before sunset Tue-Sun) is a tonic, spreading down the slopes towards Mergellina. Sitting snugly at the bottom, Villa Floridiana was built in 1817 by Ferdinand I for his wife, the Duchess of Florida. Nowadays it contains the **Museo Nazionale della Ceramica Duca di Martina** (☎ 081 578 84 18; admission €2.50; ☎ 8.30am-1.30pm Wed-Mon) and its 6000-piece collection of European, Chinese and Japanese china, ivory and enamels; and Italian majolica.

## Santa Lucia & Chiaia

### CASTEL NUOVO

Known to Neapolitans as the Maschio Angioino (Angevin Keep) and to everyone else as the Castel Nuovo, this crenellated 13th-century castle is one of Naples' landmarks. Built as part of the city makeover that Charles I of Anjou launched in the late 13th century, it was erected in three years from 1279 and christened the *Castrum Novum* (New Castle) to distinguish it from the Castel dell'Ovo.

Of the original structure only the Cappella Palatina remains; the rest is the result of renovations by the Aragonese two centuries later, as well as a meticulous restoration effort prior to WWII. The heavy grey stone that dominates the castle was imported from Mallorca. The two-storey Renaissance triumphal arch at the entrance, the Torre della Guardia, commemorates the triumphal entry of Alfonso I of Aragon into Naples in 1443.

The walls of the **Cappella Palatina** were once graced by Giotto frescoes, of which only fragments remain on the splays of the Gothic windows. Nowadays, the chapel forms part of the **Museo Civico** (☎ 081 795 58 77; admission €5; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Sat) spread across several halls on three floors. The 14th- and 15th-century frescoes and sculptures on the ground floor are of the most interest. The other two floors mostly display paintings, either by Neapolitan artists, or with Naples or Campania as subjects, covering the 17th to the early 20th centuries. Worth looking out for is Guglielmo Monaco's 15th-century bronze door, complete with a cannonball embedded in it.

Nearby on Via Medina is Bernini's 1601 **Fontana di Nettuno**. Originally situated on Piazza Bovio, it has been moved to allow construction of the metro to continue on its former site.

### PIAZZA DEL PLEBISCITO & AROUND

The undisputed star of Piazza del Plebiscito, Naples' largest square, is the **Chiesa di San Francesco di Paola** (☎ 081 74 51 33; ☎ 8am-noon & 3.30-6pm Mon-Sat, 8am-1pm Sun), a later addition to the colonnade that formed the highlight of Joachim Murat's original piazza (1809). A neoclassical copy of the Pantheon in Rome, the church was commissioned by Ferdinand I in 1817 to celebrate the restoration of his kingdom after the Napoleonic interlude.

Facing the church is the Palazzo Reale (below), with its eight statues of past kings. The royal theme continues centre square with Antonio Canova's statue of a galloping Bourbon king Charles VII and a nearby statue of his son Ferdinand I by Antonio Calì.

Adjoining the square, Piazza Trento e Trieste is fronted on the northeastern side by Italy's largest opera house, the sumptuous **Teatro San Carlo** (☎ 081 797 21 11; www.teatrosancarlo.it; Via San Carlo 98; tours €5; ☎ 9am-5.30pm), famed for its perfect acoustics. Locals will proudly boast that it was built in 1737, predating its northern rival, Milan's La Scala, by 41 years. Inaugurated on 4 December 1737 by Charles VII, it was severely damaged by a fire in 1816 and rebuilt by Antonio Niccolini, the same architect who a few years before had added the façade. Twenty-minute tours depart from the San Carlo shop every 20 minutes and are conducted in various languages, including English.

Across Via San Carlo is one of the four entrances to the palatial glass atrium of the **Galleria Umberto I** shopping centre. Opened in 1900 as a twin arcade to the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II (see p259) in Milan, it's worth a quick look more for its beautiful marble floor and structural engineering than for its shops.

### PALAZZO REALE

Flanking Piazza del Plebiscito, the rusty red **Palazzo Reale** (Royal Palace; ☎ 081 40 05 47; entrance on Piazza Trento e Trieste; admission €4; ☎ 9am-7pm Thu-Tue) was built around 1600. It was completely renovated in 1841 and suffered extensive damage during WWII.

From the courtyard, a monumental double staircase leads to the royal apartments, now home to the **Museo del Palazzo Reale** and its rich collection of baroque and neoclassical furnishings, porcelain, tapestries, statues and paintings. There's also a lavish private theatre, the Teatrino di Corte (1768), and a colossal 18th-century *presepe* in the Cappella Reale (Royal Chapel).

The palace also houses the **Biblioteca Nazionale** (National Library; ☎ 081 781 92 31; ☎ 9am-7.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat), which includes at least 2000 papyruses discovered at Herculaneum and fragments of a 5th-century Coptic Bible. Bring ID or miss out.

### THE LUNGOMARE

Marking the eastern end of the 2.5km *lungomare* (seafront), **Castel dell'Ovo** (☎ 081 240 00 55; Borgo Marinaro; admission free; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Sat, 8am-2pm Sun) sits atop the rocky Borgo Marinaro. Naples' oldest castle, it was built by the Normans in the 12th century and became a key fortress in the defence of Campania. According to myth, the castle owes its improbable name (Castle of the Egg) to Virgil, who was said to have buried an egg on the site where the castle now stands, warning that when the egg breaks the castle (and Naples) will fall.

Nearby, the **Fontana dell'Immacolatella** dates from the 17th century and features statues by Bernini and Naccherini.

West of Santa Lucia, Via Partenope spills into Piazza della Vittoria, marking the beginning of the Riviera di Chiaia. This boulevard runs beside the **Villa Comunale**, a long leafy park bordered on its seaward side by Via Francesco Caracciolo, which is closed to traffic on Sunday mornings and taken over by strollers, skaters, scooters and joggers.

Within the park is Europe's oldest aquarium. Dating to 1872, the **Stazione Zoologica** (aquarium; ☎ 081 583 32 63; Villa Comunale; adult/child €1.50/1; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Sat, 9.30am-7.30pm Sun Mar-Oct, 9am-5pm Mon-Sat, 9am-2pm Sun Nov-Feb) contains some 200 species of sea life fished out of the Bay of Naples.

Further along Riviera di Chiaia, the **Museo Pignatelli** (☎ 081 761 23 56; Riviera di Chiaia 200; admission €2; ☎ 8.30am-1.30pm Tue-Sun) is housed in a neoclassical villa that once belonged to the Rothschilds. It contains mostly 19th-century furnishings, china and other mildly interesting knick-knacks. A pavilion set in the villa's handsome gardens houses a coach museum.

## Capodimonte

### PALAZZO REALE DI CAPODIMONTE

On the northern edge of the city, this colossal palace took more than a century to build. It was originally intended as a hunting lodge for Charles VII of Bourbon, but as construction got under way in 1738 the plans kept on getting grander and grander. The result was the monumental *palazzo* that since 1759 has housed the art collection that Charles inherited from his mother Elisabetta Farnese (see below).

The **Museo di Capodimonte** (☎ 081 749 91 11; Parco di Capodimonte; admission €7.50; 🕒 8.30am–7.30pm Thu–Tue) is spread over three floors and 160 rooms. You'll never see the whole place in one day but a morning should be enough for an abridged best-of tour.

On the 1st floor you'll find works by Bellini, Botticelli, Caravaggio, Correggio, Masaccio and Titian. Highlights are numerous but look out for Masaccio's *Crocifissione* (Crucifixion), Bellini's *Trasfigurazione* (Transfiguration) and Titian's *Danae*.

In the **Galleria della Cose Rare** (Gallery of Rare Objects) check out Cardinal Alessandro Farnese's blue majolica table service. The elaborate centrepiece depicting Diana the huntress can be used as a goblet by taking off the stag's detachable head.

Also on the 1st floor, the **royal apartments** are a study in regal excess. The Salottino di

Porcellana (Room 51) is a masterpiece of tasteless extravagance with more than 3000 pieces of porcelain. It was originally created between 1757 and 1759 for the Palazzo Reale in Portici but was transferred to Capodimonte in 1867.

Upstairs, the 2nd-floor galleries display work by Neapolitan artists from the 13th to the 19th centuries, plus some spectacular 16th-century Belgian tapestries. The piece that many come to Capodimonte to see, Caravaggio's *Flagellazione* (Flagellation; 1607–10), hangs in reverential solitude in Room 78, at the end of a long corridor.

If you have any energy left, the small **gallery of modern art** on the 3rd floor is worth a quick look, if for nothing else than Andy Warhol's popstastic *Mt Vesuvius*.

Once you're finished in the museum, the 130-hectare **Parco di Capodimonte** (admission free; 🕒 9am–1hr before sunset) provides a much-needed breath of fresh air.

### CATACOMBE DI SAN GENNARO

The oldest and most famous of Naples' ancient catacombs, the **Catacombe di San Gennaro** (☎ 081 741 10 71; Via di Capodimonte 13; admission €5; 🕒 1hr tours 9am, 10am, 11am, noon, 3pm & 4pm), date to the 2nd century. Spread over two levels and decorated with early Christian frescoes, they contain a mix of tombs, corridors and broad vestibules held up by columns and arches.

### FARNESE COLLECTION ADDS TO BOURBON GRANDEUR

As revolution rocked France, the Bourbon monarchy was busy turning Naples into Europe's glitziest city. Between the accession of Charles VII to the Neapolitan throne in 1734 and Italian unification in 1860, Palazzo Reale di Capodimonte (above) was built and Palazzo Reale (p627) enlarged, while Teatro San Carlo (p627) became Europe's grandest opera house and Via Toledo its most sought-after address.

Leading the way was King Charles. Not a brilliant man, he understood little of military matters and preferred to leave politics to his chief minister Bernardo Tanucci. But what he did know about was art, a passion he'd inherited from his mother Elisabetta Farnese. He decorated his new palaces with mosaics stripped from Pompeii and Herculaneum and had his mother's art collection transferred to Capodimonte from the Farneses' power base in Parma and Piacenza.

The Farnese collection was founded by Cardinal Alessandro Farnese in the 16th century. On becoming Pope Paul III in 1534 he began by gathering art treasures for the Vatican, then turned his attention to embellishing the family seat, Palazzo Farnese, in Rome. The collection was subsequently enlarged by his two grandchildren (the papal vow of celibacy clearly not watertight) – Ottavio, who became the Duke of Parma and Piacenza, and Gran Cardinale Alessandro, who later became a serious collector in his own right, commissioning works from Michelangelo, El Greco and other contemporary painters.

The collection is today divided between the Museo Nazionale Archeologico (p625), where you'll find the ancient sculpture, and Capodimonte, which houses the collection's paintings.

They were an important pilgrimage site in the 5th century, when St Januarius' body was brought here.

## TOURS

**Napoli Sotterranea** (Underground Naples; ☎ 081 29 69 44; [www.napolisotterranea.org](http://www.napolisotterranea.org); Piazza San Gaetano 68; tours €9.30; 🚌 tours noon, 2pm & 4pm daily, extra tours 10am & 6pm Sat & Sun, 9pm Thu) runs 1½-hour guided tours of the city's underworld. Visits take you 40m below the city to explore a network of creepy passages and caves. The passages were originally hewn by the Greeks to extract tufa stone used in construction, then extended by the Romans as water conduits. More recently, they were used as air-raid shelters in WWII. Part of the tour takes place by candlelight via extremely narrow passages – not suitable for expanded girths!

More traditional tours are offered by **City Sightseeing Napoli** (☎ 081 551 72 79; [www.napoli.city-sightseeing.it](http://www.napoli.city-sightseeing.it); adult/child €20/10), which operates a hop-on, hop-off bus service. There are three routes, all of which depart from Piazza del Municipio Parco Castello. Tickets, which are available on the bus, are valid for 24 hours for each of the three routes. Tour commentaries are provided in English.

**Tourcar** (☎ 081 552 04 29; [www.tourcar.it](http://www.tourcar.it); Piazza Matteotti 1) is one of several companies that organise excursions to the Bay of Naples islands, the Amalfi Coast, Pompeii, Herculaneum and Vesuvius. Prices range from €45 for a tour to Pompeii to €85 for trips to Capri, Pompeii and the Amalfi Coast. A Naples city tour costs €30.

## FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Naples' main festival, the **Festa di San Gennaro**, honours St Januarius. On the first Sunday in May and then on 19 September and 16 December, thousands of people gather in the Duomo to witness the saint's blood liquefy – a miracle believed to save the city from potential disasters. Few actually believe that it's a real miracle but they still sigh with relief when it happens: in 1944 the miracle failed and Mt Vesuvius erupted; in 1980 it failed again and the city was struck by an earthquake.

Miracles apart, May is a good time to be in Naples. The city's premier cultural event, **Maggio dei Monumenti**, ensures a month-long menu of exhibitions, concerts, dance performances, guided tours and much more.

Summer sees plenty of festival fun. The **Madonna del Carmine**, held on 16 July, culminates in a fabulous fireworks display on Piazza del Carmine, while southern Italy's top rock fest, the **Neapolis Rock Festival** ([www.neapolis.it](http://www.neapolis.it)), attracts big acts and even bigger crowds to Arenile di Bagnoli (p634) in July/August.

You won't get much sleep during September's **La Notte Bianca** ([www.nottebiancanapoli.it](http://www.nottebiancanapoli.it)), a night-long bonanza of mainly free events including open-air film screenings, concerts, art exhibitions and dance performances. Shops also stay open all night.

## SLEEPING

Accommodation is varied and plentiful, ranging from luxury seafront piles to cheery backpacker hostels and funky B&Bs.

If you're after a cheap hotel, the area around Stazione Centrale is your best bet, although the area can be seedy at night. The places listed, however, are all clean and safe.

For maximum atmosphere, hit the *centro storico*, where historic *palazzi* house charming hotels. You'll also have many of the city's sights on your doorstep.

Seaside Santa Lucia is home to some of the city's most prestigious hotels, and Chiaia is cool and chic. For lofty views and a chilled-out vibe, hit Vomero.

The closest camp sites are in Pozzuoli to the west and Pompeii to the east.

## Around Stazione Centrale & Mercato

### BUDGET

**Hotel Casanova** (☎ 081 26 82 87; [www.hotelcasanova.com](http://www.hotelcasanova.com); Corso G Garibaldi 333; s/d €45/65, with shared bathroom €35/50; 📺) Unlike some hotels in the area, this place doesn't rent rooms by the hour. A reliable budget hotel, it offers clean, functional rooms and an unexpected flowery roof terrace. The décor is weary but the welcome is warm.

**Hostel of the Sun** (☎ 081 420 63 93; [www.hostelnapoli.com](http://www.hostelnapoli.com); Via Melisurgo 15; d/tr €70/90, dm/d/tr/q without bathroom €20/55/70/90; 📺) Constantly winning accolades, HOTS is an ultrafriendly hostel near the port. On the 7th floor of an uninspiring *palazzo* (have €0.05 handy for the lift), it's a bright, sociable place with multicoloured dorms and, five floors down, a series of hotel-standard private rooms.

**Hotel Zara** (☎ 081 28 71 25; [www.hotelzara.it](http://www.hotelzara.it); 2nd fl, Via Firenze 81; s/d €45/70; 📺 📺) A world away from the grungy streets outside, the Zara is clean,

good value and friendly. Rooms are straightforward with shiny natural wood, off-white furnishings and double-glazed windows. There's a book exchange and breakfast is an optional €4.

#### MIDRANGE

**Hotel Luna Rossa** (☎ 081 554 87 52; www.hotellunarossa.it; Via G Pica 20-22; s/d €60/90) On a quiet-ish backstreet near Piazza Garibaldi, Luna Rossa is a slick hotel run by the daughter of a Neapolitan musician. Each of the comfortable, pink-hued rooms is named after a local song, the lyrics of which are framed and hung in the room.

**Hotel Ideal** (☎ 081 26 92 37; www.albergoideal.it; Piazza Garibaldi 99; s/d €75/90; (P) (☺) (♿)) A short stagger from the train station, the Ideal is hardly that but it is convenient and staff offer a cordial welcome. Upstairs, the spacious rooms are soothing hideaways with warm salmon tones, polished wood furniture and wrought-iron bedsteads.

**Hotel Nuovo Rebecchino** (☎ 081 26 80 26; www.nuovorebecchino.it; Corso G Garibaldi 356; s €85-105, d €120-160; (P) (☺) (♿)) Refined Regency furniture and 19th-century prints combine to elegant effect in the Rebecchino's large rooms. Duvels and carpet will ward off winter chills while air-con protects against the summer heat.

### Centro Storico

#### BUDGET

**6 Small Rooms** (☎ 081 790 13 78; www.6smallrooms.com; Via Diodata Liroy 18; dm €18, d €45-55; (♿)) Run by a young Australian-Italian couple, this bright hostel is a home away from home. Once you've made it to the top floor, rest up in the large living room before rustling something up in the kitchen. Dorms are mixed, with a maximum of six beds, and there are a couple of double rooms, one upstairs and a tiny one on the ground floor.

**Albergo Duomo** (☎ 081 26 59 88; www.hotelduomonapoli.it; Via Duomo 228; s €40-50, d €55-65) In a large, grubby *palazzo* on busy Via Duomo, this is a great little hotel with cool, cream rooms and laminated parquet floors. Colourful bedspreads add a dash of colour and high ceilings lend a sense of space.

#### MIDRANGE

**Hotel Pignatelli** (☎ 081 658 49 50; www.hotelpignatellinapoli.com in Italian; Via San Giovanni Maggiore Pignatelli 16; s €40-50, d €70-90) One of the best bargains in Naples, the Pignatelli is hidden on the 2nd floor

of a historic *palazzo*. Rooms are decorated in a rustic Renaissance style with brass beds, butter-coloured walls and terracotta tiles; some even maintain their original 15th-century wood-beamed ceilings.

**Sansevero D'Angri** (☎ 081 790 10 00; www.albergosansevero.it; Piazza VII Settembre 28; d €75-100; (☺) (♿)) Treat yourself like royalty at this palatial hotel, a baroque extravaganza of frescoed ceilings, 17th-century parquet and vast gilt-framed mirrors. Originally designed by Vanvitelli, the architect behind the royal palace at Caserta, this is the grandest of four hotels run by the local Sansevero group.

**ourpick Belle Arti Resort** (☎ 081 557 10 62; www.belleartiresort.com; Via Santa Maria di Costantinopoli 27; s €65-99, d €80-160; (☺) (♿)) More boutique than B&B, this exquisite hideaway exudes class. The impeccable rooms, some as big as small suites, marry frescoed ceilings with gleaming marble bathrooms, sexy lighting and antique wardrobes. Staff are laid-back and the location, near Piazza Bellini, is right in the heart.

**Hotel Caravaggio** (☎ 081 211 00 66; www.caravaggiohotel.it; Piazza Riarlo Sforza 157; s €65-99, d €80-160; (☺) (♿)) For four-star chic in a 17th-century palace, head here. Bold abstract paintings hang opposite stone arches, yellow sofas line 300-year-old brick walls and wood-beamed ceilings cap comfortable bedrooms. Friendly staff top it all off.

**Donnalbina 7** (☎ 081 195 678 17; www.donnalbina7.it; Via Donnalbina 7; s/d €70/85; (☺) (♿)) Minimalism on a budget is what you get at this discreet B&B. The six rooms sport a decidedly modern look, with spot lighting and lashings of white offset by pale grey tiles and burgundy walls. Breakfast, included in the price, is served in your room, fresh from the *pasticceria* (cake/pastry shop) across the road.

**Portalba 33** (☎ 081 549 32 51; www.portalba33.it; Via Port'Alba 33; r €150; (☺)) Built into Port Alba, the 17th-century gate at the western end of the *centro storico*, this B&B is a magazine spread of offbeat kitsch. Features range from fake-fur bedspreads to antique rocking horses and strange shag-style seats in primary colours. There's even a weights machine for your morning work-out.

#### TOP END

**Costantinopoli 104** (☎ 081 557 10 35; www.costantinopoli104.it; Via Santa Maria di Costantinopoli 104; s/d €165/210; (☺) (♿)) This glam hotel is housed in a neoclassical villa just off trendy Piazza Bellini. Rooms

differ in look and outlook: some are modern minimalist, others have parquet and antiques; those on the 1st floor open onto a sun terrace, those on the ground floor face a palm-fringed pool. A massive stained-glass window adds a touch of Art Deco style.

## Toledo & Vomero

### BUDGET

**La Controra** (☎ 081 549 40 14; www.lacontrora.com; Piazzetta Trinità alla Cesarea 231; dm/s/d €20/28/60; 🚽 📺) This hostel, opened in May 2006, has put new life into an 18th-century convent with its hip, upbeat look. Think stainless-steel lamps, sleek bar, blonde-wood bunks, spearmint bathrooms and a sharp, communal kitchen. Snooze in a courtyard hammock or log onto free wi-fi.

**La Casa di Leo** (☎ 081 544 78 43; www.bedbreakfastnapoli.it; Via Girolamo Santacroce 5a; s €40-50, d €60-70) Home to an architect, this is a flamboyant B&B with abstract art on the walls and two airy bedrooms offering stylish décor and leafy courtyard views. The shared bathroom is spacious, the kitchen is yours to use, and there's a metro stop (Salvatore Rosa) down the street.

### MIDRANGE

**Hotel Il Convento** (☎ 081 40 39 77; www.hotelilconvento.com; Via Speranzella 137a; s €60-95, d €65-150; 🚽 📺) The Convento, named after the convent next door, is a soothing blend of rustic furniture, bookshelves and candlelit stairs. Rooms, some of which have vaulted ceilings, combine creamy tones and dark wood with patches of 16th-century brickwork. Cough up €110 to €180 for room 42 to get your own roof garden.

**Hotel Toledo** (☎ 081 40 68 71; www.hoteltoledo.com; Via Montecalvario 15; s €50-85, d €80-120; 🚽 📺) Beyond the tiny reception, this place offers smart, small rooms with dark-wood furnishings and warm, earthy colours. Lemon and palm trees adorn a roof terrace, overlooking the lively Quartieri Spagnoli.

**Napolit'amo** (☎ 081 552 36 26; www.napolitamo.it; Via Toledo 148; s €65-75, d €85-105; 🚽 📺) Escape the shopping hordes at this gilded enclave. The grandiose staircase sets the tone for the 1st-floor hotel, which features huge 18th-century mirrors, lofty ceilings and eyefuls of gold leaf.

### TOP END

**Hotel San Francisco al Monte** (☎ 081 423 91 11; www.hotel-sanfrancesco.it; Corso Vittorio Emanuele I 328; s €190-

255, d €220-285; 🚽 🚿 📺 📺) The monks in this 16th-century monastery never had it as good as the hotel's pampered guests. The cells have been converted into stylish rooms, the ancient cloisters house an open-air bar and the barrel-vaulted corridors are cool and atmospheric. To top it all, there's a swimming pool on the 7th floor.

## Santa Lucia & Chiaia

### BUDGET

**Pensione Ruggiero** (☎ 081 761 24 60; Via Giuseppe Martucci 72; s/d €60/80) Sunlight streams into the modest rooms at this unpretentious 3rd-floor *pensione* (guesthouse). They're not the biggest in the world but they're in good nick and some boast views over neighbouring Piazza Amedeo.

### MIDRANGE

**B&B Morelli** (☎ 081 245 22 91; www.bbmorelli49.it; Via Domenico Morelli 49; s €45-65, d €75-95; 🚽 📺) Camping it up all the way, this film-tastic B&B is a kitsch treat. Fellini and Almodóvar film posters are mixed with Madonna albums, Florentine floor tiles and retro lamps to create an unforgettable, quirky whole.

**B&B Cappella Vecchia** (☎ 081 240 51 17; www.bednaples.com; Vico SM a Cappella Vecchia 11; s €55-70, d €80-120; 🚽 📺) Among Chiaia's cobbles and wine bars, the Cappella Vecchia is a star. Run by a superhelpful young couple, it boasts six funky lime-green rooms, each bearing an individual hand-painted screen. There's a spacious communal area and free internet 24 hours a day.

**Hotel Rex** (☎ 081 764 93 89; www.hotel-rex.it; Via Palepoli 12; s/d €105/125; 🚽 📺) Boasting the best hotel brochure in Naples, the Rex is a throwback to a more genteel age. Old prints line lengthy corridors that lead to large rooms decorated with heavy, dark furniture, chandeliers and burnt-sienna floor tiles. There's no dining room so breakfast is served in your room.

**Hotel Pinto-Storey** (☎ 081 68 12 60; www.pintostorey.it; 4th & 5th fl, Via Martucci 72; s €75-89, d €115-155; 🚽 📺) Make it up to the 5th floor – the lift is in the far corner as you enter – and you'll find a relaxed hotel with large, airy rooms, classic décor and some stunning sea views. On a clear day you can see Capri shimmering in the haze.

**Chiaja Hotel de Charme** (☎ 081 41 55 55; www.hotelchiaia.it; Via Chiaia 216; s/d €95/145; 🚽 📺) Encompassing a former brothel and an aristocratic town house, this refined hotel lives up to its name. The look is in keeping with its

noble past – think gilt-framed portraits on pale lemon walls, opulent table lamps and heavy fabrics. Rooms facing Via Chiaia come with a Jacuzzi.

**Palazzo Turchini** (☎ 081 551 06 06; www.palazzoturcini.it; Via Medina 21-22; s/d €150/170; ♿) Housed in an imposing 17th-century *palazzo*, this smart hotel offers soothing pastel tones, parquet floors, internet access in the rooms and hydro-massage bathtubs. The flower-flanked roof terrace is the spot for a morning cappuccino and *sfogliatella* (flaky pastry filled with sweet, cinnamon ricotta).

### TOP END

**Hotel Miramare** (☎ 081 764 75 89; www.hotelmiramare.com; Via Nazario Sauro 24; s €146-199, d €202-249; ♿) A hotel since 1944, this gracious Art Nouveau villa served as the US consulate between 1915 and 1943. Rooms vary in style but all are colourful and the best feature local ceramic tiles and Florentine linen; some even have a kettle and teabags. Up top, the roof garden is a delight of flowers, hammocks and sea views.

### EATING

Drizzle and fusion might cut it elsewhere but not in Naples. Neapolitans don't want a culinary artist poncing about with their food, they want it as they've always had it – simple, seasonal and fresh. And that's exactly how they get it at the huge number of pizzerias, trattorias and *ristoranti* that litter the city.

Pizza and pasta are the staples of Neapolitan cuisine. Pizza was created here and nowhere will you eat it better (see opposite). Pasta comes in many combos, ranging from simple tomato sauces to delicious seafood mixes. Seafood is a local speciality and you'll find mussels and clams served in many dishes.

Neapolitan street food is pretty good too. *Misto di frittura* – courgette flowers, deep-fried potato and aubergine – makes for a great snack, especially if eaten from paper outside a tiny streetside stall. Neapolitan *sfogliatelle* are envied across the land and even the coffee tastes better in Naples.

### Around Stazione Centrale & Mercato

**La Sfogliatella** (☎ 081 28 56 85; Corso Novara 1) This historic, innocuous-looking *pasticcERIA* is famous for its *sfogliatelle* and other house specialities: *zeffiro all'arancia* (orange delicacy), chocolate and rum cakes, and *riccias* (*millefeuille* pastry with an apple-custard filling).

**Da Michele** (☎ 081 553 92 04; Via Cesare Sersale 1; pizzas from €3.50; ☹ Mon-Sat) As hardcore as it gets, Naples' most famous pizzeria takes the no-frills ethos to its extremes. It's dingy and old-fashioned, and serves only two types of pizza: *margherita* (tomato, basil and mozzarella) and *marinara* (tomatoes, garlic and oregano). But boy are they good!

**Trionon** (☎ 081 553 94 26; Via Pietro Colletta 42-6; pizzas from €3.80) Another city institution – film director Vittorio de Sica and comic actor Totò were regulars – this marble-clad pizzeria has been on the dough since 1923. Queues wait to tuck into the usual range of pizzas prepared with practised flair by the hardworking *pizzaioli* (pizza makers).

### Centro Storico

**Pizzeria Sorbillo** (☎ 081 44 66 43; Via dei Tribunali 32; pizzas from €3) With the corner TV tuned into the football, energetic waiters scurrying between marble-top tables and *pizzaioli* going at it full guns, this noisy pizzeria is a classic. The choice of toppings ranges from *margherita* to a regal seafood special.

**Il Caffè Arabo** (☎ 081 442 06 07; Piazza Bellini; snacks from €3) One of the squareside cafés on bohemian Piazza Bellini, this place is good for a laid-back wine (the cheapest on the piazza) and a Middle Eastern nibble or two. The menu includes falafel, hummus, *fuul* (a bean-based dip), kebabs and a brave attempt at curry.

**Trattoria da Carmine** (☎ 081 29 43 83; Via dei Tribunali 330; meals €18; ☹ Tue-Sun) A quiet haven of homely, Neapolitan cooking in the midst of the tumultuous *centro storico*. Beneath vintage photos, the patient waiter guides diners through the limited menu of regional staples such as marinated anchovies and *penne alla sorrentina* (pasta, mozzarella and tomatoes).

**La Cantina della Sapienza** (☎ 081 45 90 78; Via della Sapienza 40; meals €18; ☹ lunch only Mon-Sat) Pared-down classics made with the morning's market shop are what they do best here. Think *parmigiana di melanzane* (slices of aubergine alternated with layers of tomato sauce and mozzarella) or *pizza bianca* topped with a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil and crunchy sea salt. They also do a wicked *babà* (sponge cake soaked in rum and sugar).

**Ristorante Bellini** (☎ 081 45 97 74; Via Santa Maria di Costantinopoli 79-80; meals €23) Fish fresh off the boat is the speciality at this unpretentious old-school restaurant. Try it in dishes like *risotto alla pescatore* or vermicelli with clams and



mussels. The pizza is excellent, which is more than can be said for the dodgy house red.

**La Locanda del Grifo** (☎ 081 442 08 15; Via F del Giudice 14; meals €28) Good for people-watching, the Locanda's elegant outdoor terrace is a fine place to enjoy some topnotch cooking. Of the pastas, the *paccheri alla pescatore* (large pasta rings with seafood) stands out; of the mains, the steak with balsamic vinegar is a regular crowd-pleaser.

**Lombardi a Santa Chiara** (☎ 081 552 07 80; Via Benedetto Croce 59; meals €30; ☹ Tue-Sun) Upstairs from the ground-floor takeaway, Lombardi is a faded favourite, known and loved for its classic pizzas and Neapolitan dishes. Vegetarians are spoiled for choice with a number of satisfying salads and tempting antipasti. Book ahead at weekends.

## Toledo & Vomero

**Friggitoria Fiorenzano** (☎ 081 551 27 88; Piazza Montesanto; snacks from €1; ☹ Mon-Sat) The Brits don't have a monopoly on fried food served in paper. Here you'll find piles of crunchy deep-fried aubergines and artichokes, croquets filled with prosciutto and mozzarella, and a whole lot more.

**La Sfogliatella Mary** (☎ 081 40 22 18; Via Toledo 66; ☹ Tue-Sun) You don't want to leave Naples without trying *sfogliatella* and this hole-in-the-wall kiosk is the place to do it.

**Caprese** (☎ 081 55 87 58; Via Luca Giordano 25; lunch-time menu €8.50) Bringing a touch of the tropics to Vomero, Caprese boasts a leafy garden and tasty no-nonsense food. The set menu at

lunch is excellent value with a choice of two firsts (risotto or pasta) followed by a main course or salad, fruit and mineral water.

**Donna Teresa** (☎ 081 556 70 70; Via Michele Kerbaker 58; meals €15) Locals know exactly what they're getting when they squeeze into this tiny, eight-table trattoria – traditional food as their *nonna* (grandma) would have cooked it. The limited menu changes daily but typically you might find *spezzatini al ragù* (meat stew), *polpette* (meat balls) or *salsicce al sugo* (sausages in tomato sauce).

## Santa Lucia & Chiaia

**Kukai** (☎ 081 41 19 05; Via Carlo De Cesare 52; sushi from €4; ☹ Tue-Sun) A world away from the in-your-face Quartieri Spagnoli outside, Kukai is one of Naples' few sushi joints. The sleek black façade and blonde-wood interior set the scene for fresh sushi and sashimi, all beautifully served and reasonably priced.

**our pick Da Pietro** (☎ 081 807 10 82; Borgo Marinaro 29-30; meals €20; ☹ Tue-Sun) This modest harbour-side restaurant proves that you don't have to pay an arm and a leg to eat good seafood on trendy Borgo Marinaro. The menu, chalked up daily, depends on the day's catch, but expect bowls of hairy mussels, grilled fish and simple house wine. Don't be surprised to find queues for a table.

**Donna Margherita** (☎ 081 40 01 29; Vico Il Alabardieri 4-6; meals €23) In a back lane off Piazza dei Martiri, this trattoria-cum-pizzeria is great for huge helpings of uncomplicated, tasty food. The rich antipasti buffet makes for a good

## PICK YOUR PIZZA

Naples' most famous contribution to world cuisine is startlingly simple. Yet over the centuries the pizza has become the stuff of gastronomic legend: there are museums dedicated to it, festivals held in its honour and even websites devoted to it. Italians debate its merits, split between those who favour the thin-crust Roman variant and those who prefer the thicker, doughier, Neapolitan version.

Not surprisingly, Neapolitans regard their pizza as the authentic one – after all, they'll argue, the *margherita* was invented in honour of Queen Margherita by a Neapolitan *pizzaiola* (pizza maker) in 1889.

Nowadays, pizzerias serving the 'real thing' have a sign on the door: *la vera pizza napoletana* (the real Neapolitan pizza). And it's not just for show – to merit the seal of approval a pizza maker has to conform to strict requirements. For a *margherita*, the cheese must be mozzarella, the olive oil extra virgin and the salt from the sea. Rolling pins are banned (the dough must be tossed by hand) and the pizza has to be cooked in a wood-fired oven at a temperature of between 215°C and 250°C.

Do your own research. For some of the best pizza in Naples, head for Da Michele (opposite) near Stazione Centrale. In Rome, try Pizzeria Remo (p157) in Testaccio.

start and the vast pastas ensure you won't be running anywhere in a hurry. Try the creamy pasta *con funghi porcini* (with porcini mushrooms) and you'll get the idea.

**Di Bruno** (☎ 081 251 24 11; Riviera di Chiaia 213-214; meals €36; 📞 Tue-Sun) The best of the restaurants on yuppie Riviera di Chiaia, Bruno's boasts an elegant candlelit interior and creative cuisine. Star of the show is the seafood, with tantalising offerings such as *gnocchi con vongole veraci, zenzero e zucchini* (gnocchi with clams, ginger and courgettes) and *carpacci tagliati di pesce crudo* (thin slices of raw fish).

**Dora** (☎ 081 68 05 19; Via Ferdinando Palasciano 30; meals €45) Don't be fooled by the humble front on a forlorn street: Dora's is one of Naples' top fish restaurants. Surrounded by breezy blue-and-white tiles and marine memorabilia, dive into juicy char-grilled prawns and a crisp *frittura di pesce* (fried fish). Reservations are essential.

## DRINKING

The city's student and alternative drinking scene is around the *piazze* and alleyways of the *centro storico*. For a smarter, dressier vibe hit the cobbled lanes of upmarket Chiaia.

**Al Barcadero** (☎ 333 222 70 23; Banchina Santa Lucia 2) Duck down the steps on the left as you walk towards Borgo Marinaro and you'll find this unpretentious waterside bar. Grab a beer and watch the fishermen pootle around the marina.

**Berevino** (☎ 081 29 03 13; Via San Sebastiano 62) Sink into a sofa and enjoy the laid-back lounge vibe at this friendly *centro storico* bar. There's wine by the glass, soft music and a young, good-looking crew at the helm.

**Enoteca Belledonne** (☎ 081 40 31 62; Vico Belledonne a Chiaia 18) One of the best-loved wine bars in Chiaia. All exposed brick walls and bottle-lined shelves, it's a stalwart of the area's well-trodden *aperitivo* (happy hour) circuit.

**Intra Moenia** (☎ 081 29 07 20; Piazza Bellini 70) Lattes and literature sit side by side at this arty, left-leaning café-cum-bookshop on Piazza Bellini. Attracting a bohemian crowd, it's a great place to while away a long summer evening with something cool.

**Caffè Gambrinus** (☎ 081 41 41 33; Via Chiaia 12) Tourists and overdressed visitors self-consciously sip overpriced coffee and cocktails at Naples' most venerable café. Oscar Wilde and Bill Clinton count among the celebs who have graced its classic Art Nouveau interior.

## ENTERTAINMENT

Options run the gamut from world-class opera to jazz concerts, rock festivals and cavernous clubs. For cultural listings pick up the monthly *Qui Napoli* (at the tourist offices) or a local newspaper; for the latest club news check out the free minimag *Zero* (in Italian), available from many bars.

You can buy tickets for most sporting and cultural events at **Box Office** (☎ 081 551 91 88; www.boxofficenapoli.it; Galleria Umberto I 15-16; 📞 9.30am-1.30pm & 3.30-7pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-1.30pm Sat).

Each May the city authorities organise *Maggio dei Monumenti*, a month of concerts and cultural activities in various museums and monuments around town, most of which are free. From May until September there are also open-air concerts in various locations. Tourist offices have details.

## Nightclubs & Live Music

Clubs usually open at 10.30pm or 11pm but don't fill up until after midnight. Many close in summer (July to September), some transferring to out-of-town beach locations. Admission charges vary, but expect to pay between €5 and €25, which may or may not include a drink.

**Rising South** (☎ 081 44 70 01; Via San Sebastiano 19) Urged on by a strident soundtrack of house, drum'n'bass, Latin and electronica, a young, up-for-it crowd grooves beneath the *centro storico*. Art-house video projections provide the visuals.

**Velvet Zone** (☎ 339 427 06 72; Via Cisterna dell'Olio 11) A historic Naples club, the Velvet rocks to different tunes on different nights: Friday is electronica, Saturday is dance all the way.

**Otto Jazz Club** (☎ 081 552 43 73; Piazzetta Cariatidi 23) Up towards Vomero, Otto's is considered Naples' top jazz joint. It has hosted some of the biggest names in jazz and still stages top-quality concerts by Italian and international artists.

**Arenile di Bagnoli** (☎ 081 230 30 50; Via Nuova Bagnoli 10; 📞 May-Sep) The biggest of Naples' beachside clubs. Order a pizza, catch a band or hit the beachside dance floor for thumping house under the stars.

## Theatre

**Teatro San Carlo** (☎ 081 797 21 11; www.teatrosancarlo.it; Via San Carlo 98; 📞 box office 10am-6.30pm Tue-Sat) One of Italy's premier opera venues, the theatre stages a year-round programme of opera and ballet. Tickets, which can be fiendishly

difficult to get hold of, start at around €25 (€15 for under-30s). See p627 for more on the theatre's history.

## Sport

Some two decades have passed since Maradona led Napoli to the *scudetto* (national championship) in 1987 and 1990, and the football team is no longer the force that it was. Relegated to Serie C1 due to bankruptcy at the end of the 2003–04 season, it has since been battling to get back in the top league. At the time of writing it was second in Serie B, promotion looking a racing cert.

Home matches are played on alternate Sundays at the **Stadio San Paolo** (📞 ticket information 081 239 56 23; Piazzale Vincenzo Tecchio) in the western suburb of Fuorigrotta. To get to games take bus 152. Tickets start at about €15.

## SHOPPING

Colourful markets selling knocked-off mobile phones and bling by the bucketload; swish boutiques and second-hand book stalls; vintage delis, gents' tailors and legendary *pasticceria* – Naples has got the lot.

For a gastronomic souvenir, head to **Limone** (📞 081 29 94 29; Piazza San Gaetano 72), where you'll be able to try the organic *limoncello* (lemon liqueur) before buying a bottle. If it goes to your head, grab some lemon pasta as well.

Chiaia is the place for the fashion big guns. Among the Armani, Prada and Zegna you'll also find Naples' legendary tailors; places like **Mariano Rubinacci** (📞 081 41 57 93; Via G Filangieri 26), where you'll pay around €1500 for a jacket, or **Marinella** (📞 081 245 11 82; Piazza Vittoria 287), whose made-to-measure ties were worn by Aristotle Onassis and Gianni Agnelli.

Naples is renowned for its handmade *presepi*, and every Christmas thousands flock to the artisans' shops on Via San Gregorio Armeno to stock up on figurines. These range from the sublime to the supremely kitsch, from exquisite hand-carved Virgin Maries to baby Jesuses with flashing haloes and caricatures of Italian politicians.

If you want to escape shopping chaos, avoid the main shopping strip, Via Toledo, on Saturday mornings.

## GETTING THERE & AWAY

### Air

**Capodichino airport** (NAP; 📞 081 789 62 59; www.gesac.it), 7km northeast of the city centre, is south-

ern Italy's main airport, linking Naples with most Italian and several major European cities, as well as New York. Several budget airlines fly here, including Easyjet and BMI.

## Boat

Naples, the bay islands and the Amalfi Coast are served by a comprehensive ferry network. In Naples, ferries and hydrofoils leave for Capri, Sorrento, Ischia Procida and Forio from Molo Beverello in front of Castel Nuovo; hydrofoils for Capri, Ischia and Procida also sail from Mergellina; longer-distance ferries for Palermo, Cagliari, Milazzo, the Aeolian Islands (Isole Eolie) and Tunisia leave from the Stazione Marittima.

Tickets for shorter journeys can be bought at the ticket booths on Molo Beverello and at Mergellina. For longer journeys try the offices of the ferry companies or a travel agent.

*Qui Napoli* lists timetables for Bay of Naples services. Note, however, that ferry services are pared back considerably in the winter and adverse sea conditions may affect sailing schedules.

Following is a list of ferry and hydrofoil companies and the destinations they service. The fares are for a one-way, high-season, deck-class single.

**Alilauro** (📞 081 497 22 67; www.alilauro.it; Stazione Marittima) Operates hydrofoils to Sorrento (€9.50), Ischia (€16) and Forio (€17).

**Caremar** (📞 081 551 38 82; www.caremar.it; Molo Beverello) Serves Capri (ferry/fast ship €8.90/13.80), Ischia (€5.60/12.65) and Procida (€4.50/10.60).

**LMP** (Linea Marittima Partenope; 📞 081 704 19 11; www.consorzioimp.it; Via Guglielmo Melisurgo 4) Runs hydrofoils to Sorrento (€9.50).

**Medmar** (📞 081 551 33 52; www.medmargroup.it; Stazione Marittima) Operates services to Ischia (€9.50) and weekly sailings to the Aeolian Islands (€46).

**Metrol del Mare** (📞 199 44 66 44; www.metrodelmare.com; Molo Beverello) Runs summer-only services to Sorrento (€4.50), Positano (€9), Amalfi (€10) and Salerno (€10.50).

**Navigazione Libera del Golfo** (NLG; 📞 081 552 07 63; www.navlib.it in Italian; Molo Beverello) Runs hydrofoils to Capri (€15) year-round.

**Siremar** (📞 081 017 19 98; www.siremar.it; Stazione Marittima) Operates boats to the Aeolian Islands and Milazzo (€47.90, six times weekly in summer, dropping to three in the low season).

**SNAV** (📞 091 428 55 55; www.snav.it; Stazione Marittima) Runs hydrofoils to Capri (€15), Procida (€11) and Ischia (€14); also ferries to Palermo (€32). In summer there are daily services to the Aeolian Islands (€98 to Lipari).

**Tirrenia** (☎ 081 720 11 11; www.tirrenia.it; Stazione Marittima) Operates a weekly boat to Cagliari (€43) and Palermo (€52). The service increases to twice weekly in summer.

## Bus

Most national and international buses leave from Piazza Garibaldi.

Regional bus services are operated by a number of companies, the most useful of which is **SITA** (☎ 199 73 07 49; www.sita-on-line.it in Italian), which runs buses from Naples to Pompeii (€2.30, 40 minutes, half-hourly), Sorrento (€3.20, one hour 20 minutes, twice daily), Positano (€3.20, two hours, twice daily), Amalfi (€3.20, two hours, six daily) and Salerno (€3.20, one hour 10 minutes, every 25 minutes). Casting wider, it runs to Bari (€19, 4½ hours, twice daily) and operates a service to Germany, including Dortmund (€116) via Munich (€90), Stuttgart (€94) and Frankfurt (€102). You can buy SITA tickets and catch buses from Porto Immacolatella, near Stazione Marittima, or from Via G Ferraris, near Stazione Centrale; you can also buy tickets at **Bar Clizia** (Corso Arnaldo Lucii 173).

**Marino** (☎ 199 800 100) has buses to Bari (€19, three hours); **Micolis** (☎ 081 20 03 80) runs to Taranto (€18, four hours), Brindisi (€25.60, five hours) and Lecce (€28, 5½ hours); while **CLP** (☎ 081 531 17 07) serves Foggia (€9, two hours), Perugia (€28, 4½ hours) and Assisi (€30, five hours).

## Car & Motorcycle

Naples is on the Autostrada del Sole, the A1 (north to Rome and Milan) and the A3 (south to Salerno and Reggio di Calabria). The A30 skirts Naples to the northeast, while the A16 heads across the Apennines to Bari.

On approaching the city, the motorways meet the Tangenziale di Napoli, a major ring road around the city. The ring road hugs the city's northern fringe, meeting the A1 for Rome in the east, and continuing westwards towards the Campi Flegrei and Pozzuoli.

## Train

Naples is southern Italy's main rail hub. Most national trains arrive at or depart from Stazione Centrale or, underneath the main station, Stazione Garibaldi. There are up to 30 trains daily to Rome (€21.50, two hours), some of which stop at Mergellina station, and some 20 to Salerno (€6.50, 35 minutes).

The **Stazione Circumvesuviana** (☎ 081 772 24 44; www.vesuviana.it; Corso G Garibaldi), southwest of Stazione Centrale (follow the signs from the main concourse), operates trains to Sorrento (€3.20, 70 minutes) via Ercolano (€1.70, 20 minutes), Pompeii (€2.30, 40 minutes) and other towns along the coast. There are about 40 trains daily running between 5am and 10.30pm, with reduced services on Sunday.

**Ferrovía Cumana** and **Circumflegrea** (☎ 800 00 16 16; www.sepsa.it), based at Stazione Cumana di Montesanto on Piazza Montesanto, 500m southwest of Piazza Dante, operate services to Pozzuoli (€1, 20 minutes, every 25 minutes).

## GETTING AROUND To/From the Airport

By public transport you can take either the regular **ANM** (☎ 800 63 95 25; www.anm.it in Italian) bus 3S (€1, 30 minutes, every 15 minutes) from Piazza Garibaldi or the **Alibus** (☎ 800 63 95 25; www.anm.it in Italian) airport shuttle (€3, 20 minutes, half-hourly) from Piazza del Municipio or Piazza Garibaldi.

Official taxi fares to the airport are as follows: €19 from a seafront hotel or from Mergellina hydrofoil terminal; €16 from Piazza del Municipio; and €12.50 from Stazione Centrale.

## Bus

In Naples, buses are operated by the city transport company **ANM** (☎ 800 63 95 25; www.anm.it in Italian). There's no central bus station but most buses pass through Piazza Garibaldi, the city's chaotic transport hub. To locate your bus stop you'll probably need to ask at the information kiosk in the centre of the square.

Useful bus services:

**24** From Piazza del Municipio up to Piazza Dante and on to Capodimonte.

**140** From Santa Lucia to Posillipo via Mergellina.

**152** From Piazza Garibaldi to Corso G Garibaldi, Molo Beverello, Via Santa Lucia, Piazza Vittoria and on to Pozzuoli.

**201** From Stazione Centrale to the Museo Archeologico Nazionale, down to Piazza del Municipio and then back to Piazza Garibaldi, via Piazza Dante.

**404D** A night bus operating from 11.20pm to 4am (hourly departures) from Stazione Centrale to Piazza del Municipio, then on to Mergellina and Vomero, and back down to Stazione Centrale.

**E1** From Piazza del Gesù, along Via Costantinopoli to Museo Archeologico Nazionale, then Via dei Tribunali, Via Duomo, Piazza Nicola Amore, Corso Umberto I and Via Mezzocannone.

**R1** From Piazza Medaglie D'Oro to Piazza Dante, Via Toledo, Piazza Bovio and Piazza del Municipio.

**R2** From Stazione Centrale, along Corso Umberto I to Piazza Bovio, Piazza del Municipio and Piazza Trieste e Trento.

**R3** From Mergellina along the Riviera di Chiaia to Piazza del Municipio, Via Toledo, Via San Carlo and Piazza Trieste e Trento.

**R4** From Capodimonte down past Piazza Dante to Piazza Municipio and back again.

## Car & Motorcycle

Driving in Naples is not recommended. The weight of the anarchic traffic means that cars rarely travel faster than walking pace and parking is a nightmare. A scooter is quicker and easier to park but is even more nerve-wracking to ride. Car/bike theft is a major problem.

Officially much of the city centre is closed to nonresident traffic for much of the day. Daily restrictions are in place in the *centro storico*, in the area around Piazza del Municipio and Via Toledo, and in the Chiaia district around Piazza dei Martiri. Hours vary but are typically from 8am to 6.30pm, possibly later.

East of the city centre, there's a 24-hour car park at Via Brin (€1.10 for the first four hours, €0.30 for every successive hour).

The major car-hire firms are all represented in Naples:

**Avis** (☎ 081 28 40 41; [www.avisautonoleggio.it](http://www.avisautonoleggio.it); Corso Novara 5) Also at Capodichino airport.

**Hertz** (☎ 081 20 62 28; [www.hertz.it](http://www.hertz.it); Via G Ricciardi 5) Also at Capodichino airport and Mergellina.

**Maggiore** (☎ 081 28 78 58; [www.maggiore.it](http://www.maggiore.it); Stazione Centrale) Also at Capodichino airport.

**Rent Sprint** (☎ 081 764 13 33; Via Santa Lucia 36) Scooter hire only.

An economy car will cost about €60 per day; for a scooter expect to pay about €35.

## Funicular

Three of Naples' four funicular railways connect the centre with Vomero:

**Funicolare Centrale** Ascends from Via Toledo to Piazza Fuga.

**Funicolare di Chiaia** From Via del Parco Margherita to Via Domenico Cimarosa.

**Funicolare di Montesanto** From Piazza Montesanto to Via Raffaele Morghen.

The fourth, Funicolare di Mergellina, connects the waterfront at Via Mergellina with Via Manzoni. Unico Napoli tickets (see boxed text, right) are valid for one trip on the funiculars.

## Metro

Currently being extended, Naples' **Metropolitana** (☎ 800 56 88 66; [www.metro.na.it](http://www.metro.na.it)) is, in fact, mostly above ground. Metro journeys are covered by Unico Napoli tickets (see below).

**Line 1** Runs north from Piazza Dante stopping at Museo (for Piazza Cavour and Line 2), Materdei, Salvatore Rosa, Cilea, Piazza Vanvitelli, Piazza Medaglie D'Oro and seven stops beyond.

**Line 2** Runs from Gianturco, just east of Stazione Centrale, with stops at Piazza Garibaldi (for Stazione Centrale), Piazza Cavour, Montesanto, Piazza Amedeo, Mergellina, Piazza Leopardi, Campi Flegrei, Cavaleggeri d'Aosta, Bagnoli and Pozzuoli.

## Taxi

Official taxis are white, have meters and bear the Naples symbol, the Pulcinella (with his distinctive white cone-shaped hat and long hooked nose), on their front doors. There are taxi stands at most of the city's main piazzas or you can call one of the five taxi cooperatives: **Napoli** (☎ 081 556 44 44), **Consortaxi** (☎ 081 20 20 20), **Cotana** (☎ 081 570 70 70), **Free** (☎ 081 551 51 51) or **Partenope** (☎ 081 556 02 02).

The minimum fare for a ride is €4.15, of which €2.60 is the starting fare. There's also a baffling range of additional charges: €0.80 for a radio taxi call, €1.60 extra on Sundays and holidays, €2.10 more between 10pm and 7am, €2.60 for an airport run and €0.50 per piece of luggage in the boot.

Always ensure the meter is on.

See opposite for fares to the airport.

## TICKETS PLEASE

Tickets for public transport in Campania are managed by the **Unico Campania** ([www.unicocampania.it](http://www.unicocampania.it)) consortium. For travel in Naples, Unico Napoli tickets are sold at stations, ANM booths and tobacconists. The standard ticket costs €1 and is valid for 90 minutes of unlimited travel by bus, tram, metro, Ferrovia Cumana or Circumflegrea, and one funicular ride. A daily ticket is good value at €3 (or €2.50 on Saturdays and Sundays), and a weekly ticket costs €9. These tickets are not valid to Pompeii or Ercolano on the Circumvesuviana train line. For longer distances and for travel within the region, ticket prices depend on the distance to travel.

## AROUND NAPLES

### CAMPI FLEGREI

Stretching west from Posillipo to the Tyrrhenian Sea, the Campi Flegrei (Phlegraean – or ‘Fiery’ – Fields) is a pockmarked area of craters, lakes and fumaroles, one of the world’s most geologically unstable. Here, archaeological ruins stand in the midst of modern eyesores and history merges with myth. This is where Icarus plunged to his death, where Aeneas sought the Sybil’s advice, and where Greek colonists first settled in Italy – Cuma dates to the 8th century BC while Pozzuoli, the main centre, was founded around 530 BC.

Before exploring the area it’s worth stopping at Pozzuoli tourist office to pick up a copy of the helpful leaflet *Welcome to the Campi Flegrei*. Also a good idea is the two-day €4 cumulative ticket that covers the archaeological sites of Baia and Cuma.

### Pozzuoli

The first town that emerges beyond Naples’ dreary western suburbs is Pozzuoli, a workaday place whose attractions are not immediately apparent. However, nose around and you’ll find some impressive Roman ruins and a weird, steaming volcanic crater. The town was established by the Greeks around 530 BC and later renamed Puteoli (Little Wells) by the Romans, who turned it into a major port. It was here that St Paul is said to have landed in AD 61, that St Januarius was beheaded and that screen goddess Sophia Loren spent her childhood.

The **tourist office** (☎ 081 526 66 39; Piazza G Matteotti 1a; ☎ 9am–7.30pm daily Jun–Sep, 9am–3.30pm Mon–Fri Oct–May) is beside the Porta Napoli gate, a five-minute walk downhill from the metro station.

Rising 33m above the western end of the seafloor, the **Rione Terra** (☎ 848 80 02 88; Largo Sedile di Porto; admission €3; ☎ tours 11am, noon, 4pm & 5pm Sat & Sun) is Pozzuoli’s oldest quarter and ancient Puteoli’s acropolis. Underground visits to the quarter, which was abandoned en masse in the 1970s due to severe bradyseism (the slow upward and downward movement of the earth’s crust), are by guided tour only.

Just east of the port, sunken in a leafy piazza, sits the **Tempio di Serapide** (Temple of Serapis). Despite its name, it wasn’t a temple

at all, but an ancient *macellum* (town market). Named after a statue of the Egyptian god Serapis found here in 1750, its toilets (at either side of the eastern apse) are considered works of ancient ingenuity. Badly damaged over the centuries by bradyseism, the temple is occasionally flooded by sea water.

Head northeast along Via Rosini to the ruins of the 1st-century BC **Anfiteatro Flavio** (☎ 081 526 60 07; Via Terracciano 75; admission €4; ☎ 9am–1hr before sunset Wed–Mon). The third-largest amphitheatre in Italy, it could hold over 20,000 spectators and was occasionally flooded for mock naval battles. Under the main arena you can wander among fallen columns and get your head around the complex mechanics involved in hoisting the caged wild beasts up to their waiting victims. In AD 305 seven Christian martyrs, including St Januarius, were thrown to the animals here. They survived only to be beheaded later.

Some 2km up Via Rosini, which becomes Via Solfatara, the surreal **Solfatara crater** (☎ 081 526 23 41; www.solfatara.it; Via Solfatara 161; admission €5.50; ☎ 8.30am–7pm Apr–Sep, 8.30am–4.30pm Oct–Mar) was known to the Romans as the Forum Vulcani (home of the god of fire). At the far end of the steaming, malodorous crater are the **Stufe**, in which two ancient grottoes were excavated at the end of the 19th century to create two brick *sudatoria* (sweat rooms). Christened Purgatory and Hell, they both reach temperatures of up to 90°C. To get to the crater, catch any city bus heading uphill from the metro station and ask the driver to let you off at Solfatara.

Pozzuoli has several camp sites which are the nearest ones to Naples. Up by the Solfatara, a canopy of trees provides shade at the well-equipped **Camping Vulcano Solfatara** (☎ 081 526 74 13; www.solfatara.it; Via Solfatara 161; camp sites per adult/child/tent €9.20/4.60/10; ☎ Apr–Oct; 🏠).

There are frequent car and passenger ferries from Pozzuoli to Ischia and Procida, run by a variety of companies. Typical prices are €2.60 to Procida and €5.60 to Ischia – more if you take a hydrofoil.

By bus, take AMN bus 152 from Naples.

If you have your own wheels, take the Tangenziale ring road from Naples and swing off at the Pozzuoli exit. Less swift but more scenic is taking Via Francesco Caracciolo along the Naples waterfront to Posillipo, then onto Pozzuoli.

Both the **Ferrovia Cumana** (☎ 800 00 16 16; www.sepsa.it) and the Naples metro (line 2) serve Pozzuoli.

## Baia & Cuma

About 7km southwest of Pozzuoli, Baia was an upmarket Roman holiday resort with a reputation as a sordid centre of sex and sin. Today much of the ancient town is under water and modern development has left what is effectively a built-up, ugly and uninspiring coastal road.

At weekends between April and September, CYMBA runs glass-bottom boat tours of **Baia Sommersa** (☎ 349 497 41 83; www.baiasommersa.it; tours €10; 🕒 departures noon & 3pm Sat, 10am, noon & 3pm Sun), the underwater ruins. All year round, however, you can admire the elaborate *nymphaeum* (shrine to the water nymph), complete with statues, jewels, coins and decorative pillars dredged up and reassembled in the small **Museo Archeologico dei Campi Flegrei** (☎ 081 523 37 97; Via Castello; admission €4; 🕒 9am-1hr before sunset Tue-Sun). The 15th-century castle that houses the museum was built by Naples' Aragon rulers as a defence against possible French invasion.

Cuma (known to the ancient Greeks as Cumae) was the earliest Greek colony on the Italian mainland. The highlight of the **Acropoli di Cuma** (☎ 081 854 30 60; Via Montecuma; admission €4; 🕒 9am-2hr before sunset) is the haunting **Anthro della Sibilla Cumana** (Cave of the Cuman Sybil). Hollowed out of the tufa bank, its eerie 130m-long trapezoidal tunnel leads to the vaulted chamber where the Sybil was said to pass on messages from Apollo. The poet Virgil writes of Aeneas coming here to seek the oracle, who directs him to the underworld, entered from nearby **Lago d'Averno** (Lake Avernus). The lake, a 1km walk from Lucrino train station, is now a chilled-out spot for a picnic.

In Pozzuoli you can pick up **CTP** (☎ 800 48 26 44; www.ctpn.it) bus P12R to Cuma. For Baia, jump on **SepSA** (☎ 800 00 16 16; www.sepsa.it) bus 2 at Lucrino train station (Ferrovia Cumana).

If coming to Cuma by bus, ask the driver what time buses return to Pozzuoli; you'll save yourself a long and tedious roadside wait.

## CASERTA

pop 79,500

The one compelling reason to stop at this otherwise nondescript town, 22km north of Naples, is to visit the colossal Palazzo Reale.

Dubbed the Italian Versailles, the vast palace is one of the greatest – and last – achievements of Italian baroque architecture. It is also where Tom Cruise shot scenes for *Mission Impossible III* and where George Lucas filmed the interior shots of Queen Amidala's royal residence in *Star Wars Episode 1: The Phantom Menace* and *Star Wars Episode 2: Attack of the Clones*.

Caserta was founded in the 8th century by the Lombards on the site of a Roman emplacement atop Monte Tifata, expanding onto the plains below from the 12th century onwards. The construction of the Bourbons' grand palace assured the town an importance it would otherwise never have known.

Caserta's **tourist office** (☎ 0823 32 11 37; Palazzo Reale; 🕒 8.30am-3.40pm Mon-Sat) is near the entrance to the palace gardens.

## Sights

Known to Italians as the Reggia di Caserta, the Unesco-listed **Palazzo Reale** (☎ 0823 44 80 84; Via Douhet 22; admission €6, audioguide €3.50; 🕒 8.30am-7pm Wed-Mon) is one of Italy's top tourist attractions, pulling in some 460,000 visitors each year.

Work on the palace began in 1752 after King Charles VII of Bourbon ordered a palace to rival Versailles. Neapolitan Luigi Vanvitelli was commissioned for the job and built a palace not just equal to Versailles, but even bigger. With its 1200 rooms, 1790 windows, 34 staircases and a 250m-long façade, it was reputedly the largest building in 18th-century Europe.

You enter by Vanvitelli's immense staircase, a masterpiece of vainglorious baroque, and follow a route through the royal apartments, richly decorated with tapestries, furniture and crystal. Beyond the library is a room containing a vast collection of *presepi* composed of hundreds of hand-carved nativity pieces.

To clear your head afterwards, take a walk in the elegant landscaped **park** (🕒 8.30am-2hr before sunset Wed-Mon). It stretches for some 3km to a waterfall and fountain of Diana and the famous **Giardino Inglese** (English Garden; 🕒 tours every hr 9.30am-1pm Wed-Mon) with its intricate pathways, exotic plants, pools and cascades. Last entry is one hour before closing.

The weary can cover the same ground in a pony and trap (from €5) or for €1 you can bring a bike into the park. A picnic is another good idea. Within the palace there's also the **Mostra Terrea Motus** (admission free with palace ticket;

☎ 9am-6pm Wed-Mon), illustrating the 1980 earthquake that devastated the region.

When you're done, revive yourself in the palace's cafeteria and restaurant.

## Getting There & Away

CPTC buses connect Caserta with Naples' Piazza Garibaldi (€2.80) about every 30 minutes between 8am and 8pm. Some Benevento services also stop in Caserta.

The town is on the main train line between Rome (€10.50) and Naples (€3.10). Both bus and train stations are near the Palazzo Reale entrance, which is signposted from each. If you're driving, follow signs for the Reggia.

## AROUND CASERTA

Hidden in the unappealing urban sprawl that surrounds Caserta are a few historical pearls that merit a quick detour, particularly if you have your own car.

In San Leucio, around 2km northwest of Caserta, the **Complesso Monumentale Belvedere** (☎ 0823 30 18 17; Via Atrio Superiore; admission €6; ☎ 9am-1pm & 3-6pm Wed-Mon, 9am-6pm Sat & Sun) is a purpose-built 18th-century industrial complex. A pet project of King Ferdinand to house the poor and employ them in a silk factory, it's now home to a small industrial museum. Visits, by guided tour only, must be booked in advance. To get to the complex, take bus 107 from Caserta train station.

About 10km northeast of Caserta (bus 10) lies semideserted **Casertavecchia**, the original medieval hilltop town. Its highlight is the magnificent domed 12th-century **Duomo** (☎ 0823 37 13 18; Piazza Vescovardo; ☎ 9am-1pm & 3.30-7pm), a stunning example of Romanesque architecture.

Populated by the Etruscans and Samnites before becoming an important Roman city, **Santa Maria Capua Vetere**, 12km west of Caserta, conceals a number of interesting ruins. Chief among them is the 1st-century-AD **anfiteatro** (☎ 0823 79 88 64; admission €2.50; ☎ 9am-1hr before sunset Tue-Sun), the largest amphitheatre in Italy after the Colosseum in Rome and famous as the starting point for Spartacus' 71 BC gladiators' revolt. Within the amphitheatre is the **Musei dei Gladiatori** (free with amphitheatre ticket). Elsewhere in town, you'll find the remains of the **Arco d'Adriano** (Hadrian's Arch), under which passed the Via Appia, and a **Mithraic temple** used for initiations into the mysterious Mithraism cult.

Most of the artefacts from the area are now housed in the **Museo Provinciale Campano** (☎ 0823

96 14 02; www.museocampano.it; Via Roma 68; admission €4.15; ☎ 9am-1.30pm Tue-Sat, 9am-1pm Sun), in the modern town of Capua. Regular buses run from Caserta train station to Santa Maria Capua Vetere and Capua.

## BENEVENTO

pop 63,100

Despite the ring of drab modern housing blocks that announces Benevento, the city boasts a lovely centre peppered with remnants of its ancient past. Nestled in the green hills of the Apennines, it was originally known as Maleventum but was renamed Beneventum after the Romans ousted the Samnites in 275 BC. Its golden age came around the 8th century when it controlled much of southern Italy as a Lombard duchy. In the 11th century it was transferred to the control of the papacy and remained mostly under papal rule until 1860.

The helpful **tourist office** (☎ 0824 31 99 38; Piazza Roma 11; ☎ 8.30am-1.45pm & 2.45-6pm) is in the historic centre.

## Sights

The town was heavily bombed in WWII and the Romanesque **cathedral** with its elaborate façade had to be largely rebuilt. Southwest of the cathedral is a restored **Roman theatre** dating from Hadrian's time. The beautifully preserved **Arco di Traiano** (Trajan's Arch), built in AD 114, commemorates the opening of the Via Traiano, while the **obelisk** (Piazza Matteotti) marks the Napoleonic invasion of Italy.

Nearby, the atmospheric 8th-century **Chiesa di Santa Sofia** adjoins what was once a Benedictine abbey. Nowadays, the abbey houses the **Museo Sannio** (☎ 0824 2 18 18; Piazza Santa Sofia; admission €4; ☎ 9am-7pm Tue-Sun), whose collection contains remnants of a 1st-century temple dedicated to the Egyptian goddess Isis, along with some impressive archaeological finds. The ticket price includes admission to the church's tranquil cloisters.

## Sleeping & Eating

**Hotel President** (☎ 0824 31 67 16; www.hotelpresident.benevento.it; Via GB Perasso 1; s/d €75/110) Modern and central, the President is convenient rather than characterful. The comfortable, bland rooms feature stripy fabrics, white walls and polished wood.

**Teatro Gastronomico** (☎ 0824 546 05; Via Traiano 65; meals €28; ☎ Tue-Sun) A theatrical restaurant near the Arco di Traiano. Its flamboyant interior



is decorated like a stage set while the food is traditional and filling. Expect warming pasta and meaty mains.

### Getting There & Away

**FBN** (☎ 082424961) buses and **Ferrovio Benevento** (☎ 0824320711) trains both operate direct services between Benevento and Naples (€4.10). The train station is a good half-hour slog from the town centre and sights. Alternatively, local bus 1 runs half-hourly from the train station to the town centre. Buses also link Benevento with Rome (€18) and Campobasso (€4.40).

Benevento is on the SS7 (Via Appia) and close to the A16.

### AVELLINO & AROUND

Largely rebuilt after the shattering earthquake of 1980, modern-day Avellino won't delay you long. The area's main sight is 1000m above town, perched on the vertiginous summit of Monte Vergine (1493m). The **Santuario di Montevergine** (☎ 082572924; abbey/museum free/€1; ☎ 6.30am-8pm Apr-Oct, 7.30am-5.30pm Nov-Mar) dates to the 12th century, when a young pilgrim, Guglielmo di Vercelli, built the first church here. Since then it's undergone numerous face-lifts, the last being in the mid-20th century. You can visit the abbey and enjoy a small collection of archaeological finds, sculpture and painting in the sanctuary museum.

The green slopes around Avellino are home to some of Campania's finest vineyards. Fiano di Avellino, a dry white, Greco di Tufo and Taurasi, the region's top red, are all produced in the area.

For some winter exercise, there's limited skiing at **Lago di Laceno**, about 30km southeast of Avellino.

For more information on Avellino and its environs contact the town's **tourist office** (☎ 082574732; www.eptavellino.it in Italian; Via Due Principati 32a; ☎ 9am-1.30pm & 4.30-7pm Mon-Sat).

Buses connect Avellino to Naples (€3.20) every 20 minutes or so. In summer buses go from Avellino to Monte Vergine and the sanctuary.

## BAY OF NAPLES

### CAPRI

pop 13,700

A stark mass of limestone rock that rise sheerly through impossibly blue water, Capri (pronounced *ca-pri*) is the perfect micro-

cosm of Mediterranean appeal – a smooth cocktail of chichi piazzas and cool cafés, Roman ruins and rugged seascapes. It's also a hugely popular day-trip destination and a summer favourite of holidaying VIPs. Inevitably, the two main centres, Capri Town and its uphill rival Anacapri, are almost entirely given over to tourism and prices are high. But explore beyond the designer boutiques and pointedly traditional trattorias and you'll find that Capri's hinterland retains an unspoiled rural charm with grand villas, overgrown vegetable plots, sun-bleached peeling stucco and banks of brilliantly coloured bougainvillea.

There are few must-sees on the island but there's one you'd be sorry to miss. The Grotta Azzurra (Blue Cave) might be Capri's most visited sight but the impact of the ethereal blue light is no less powerful for the crowds and singing boat owners. On the island's other extremity, the ruins of Villa Jovis testify to the presence of the infamous Tiberius.

### History

Already inhabited in the Palaeolithic age, Capri was briefly occupied by the Greeks before the Emperor Augustus made it his private playground and Tiberius retired here in AD 27. Its modern incarnation as a tourist centre dates to the early 20th century, when it was invaded by an army of European artists, writers and Russian revolutionaries.

### Orientation

About 5km from the mainland at its nearest point, Capri is a mere 6km long and 2.7km wide. All hydrofoils and ferries arrive at Marina Grande, the island's transport hub. From here the quickest way up to Capri Town is by funicular, but there are also buses and taxis. On foot, it's a tough 2.25km climb along Via Marina Grande. At the top, turn left (east) at the junction with Via Roma for the centre of town or right (west) for Via Provinciale di Anacapri, which eventually becomes Via G Orlandi as it leads up to Anacapri.

Pint-sized Piazza Umberto I is the focal point of Capri Town. A short hop to the east, Via Vittorio Emanuele leads down to the main shopping street, Via Camerelle.

Up in Anacapri, buses and taxis drop you off in Piazza Vittoria, from where Via G Orlandi runs southwest and Via Capodimonte heads up to Villa San Michele di Axel Munthe.

**Information****EMERGENCY**

**Police station** (Map p644; ☎ 081 837 42 11; Via Roma 70, Capri Town)

**INTERNET ACCESS**

**Capri Internet Point** (Map p645; ☎ 081 837 32 83; Via de Tommaso 1, Anacapri; per hr €4; ☎ 8am-9pm Mon-Sat, 8am-2pm Sun May-Oct, shorter hr Nov-Apr) Also sells international newspapers.

**INTERNET RESOURCES**

**Capri Island** ([www.capri.net](http://www.capri.net)) Excellent website with listings, itineraries and ferry schedules.

**Capri Tourism** ([www.capritourism.com](http://www.capritourism.com)) Official website of Capri tourist office.

**MEDICAL SERVICES**

**Farmacia Internazionale** (Map p644; ☎ 081 837 04 85; Via Roma 24, Capri Town)

**Hospital** (Map p643; ☎ 081 838 12 05; Via Provinciale Anacapri 5)

**POST**

**Post office** Capri Town (Map p644; ☎ 081 978 52 11; Via Roma 50); Anacapri (Map p645; ☎ 081 837 10 15; Via de Tommaso 8)

**TOURIST INFORMATION**

**Tourist office** Marina Grande (Map p643; ☎ 081 837 06 34; ☎ 9am-1pm & 3.30-6.45pm daily Jun-Sep, 9am-3pm Mon-Sat Oct-May); Capri Town (Map p644; ☎ 081 837 06 86; Piazza Umberto I; ☎ 8.30am-8.30pm daily Jun-Sep, 9am-1pm & 3.30-6.45pm Mon-Sat Oct-May); Anacapri (Map p645; ☎ 081 837 15 24; Via G Orlandi 59; ☎ 8.30am-8.30pm daily Jun-Sep, 9am-3pm Mon-Sat Oct-Dec & Mar-May)

Each tourist office can provide a free map of the island with town plans of Capri and Anacapri, and a more detailed one for €0.80. For hotel listings and other useful information, ask for a free copy of *Capri è*.

**Sights****CAPRI TOWN**

With its whitewashed stone buildings and tiny car-free streets, Capri Town seems more film set than real life. In summer its toy-town streets swell with camera-wielding day-trippers and gangs of the glossy rich. Central to the action is **Piazza Umberto I** (aka the Piazzetta), the showy, open-air salon where tanned tourists pay eye-watering prices to sip at one of four squareside cafés. Nearby, the 17th-

century **Chiesa di Santo Stefano** (Map p644; ☎ 081 837 00 72; Piazza Umberto I; ☎ 8am-8pm) boasts a well-preserved marble floor (taken from Villa Jovis) and a statue of San Costanzo, Capri's patron saint. Beside the northern chapel is a reliquary with a saintly bone that reputedly saved Capri from the plague in the 19th century.

Over the road, the **Museo del Centro Caprense i Cerio** (Map p644; ☎ 081 837 66 81; Piazzetta Cerio 5; admission €2.60; ☎ 10am-1pm Tue-Sat) has a library of books and journals about the island (mostly in Italian) and a collection of locally found fossils.

To the east of the Piazzetta, Via Vittorio Emanuele and its continuation Via F Serena lead down to the picturesque **Certosa di San Giacomo** (Map p644; ☎ 081 837 62 18; Viale Certosa 40; admission free; ☎ 9am-2pm Tue-Sat, 9am-1pm Sun), a 14th-century monastery with two cloisters and some fine 17th-century frescoes in the chapel.

From the *certosa*, Via G Matteotti leads down to the colourful **Giardini di Augusto** (Gardens of Augustus; Map p644; ☎ dawn-dusk), founded by the Emperor Augustus. The view from the gardens is breathtaking, looking over to the **Isole Faraglioni** (Map p643), three limestone pinnacles that rise vertically out of the sea.

**VILLA JOVIS & AROUND**

East of Capri Town, a comfortable hour-long walk along Via Tiberio, is **Villa Jovis** (Jupiter's Villa; Map p643; ☎ 081 837 06 34; Via Tiberio; admission €2; ☎ 9am-1hr before sunset), also known as the Palazzo di Tiberio. Standing 354m above sea level, this was the largest and most sumptuous of the island's 12 Roman villas and Tiberius' main Capri residence. It's not in great nick today but the size of the ruins gives an idea of the scale at which Tiberius liked to live. His private rooms, offering superb views over to the Punta Campanella, were on the northern and eastern sides of the complex.

The stairway behind the villa leads to the 330m-high **Salto di Tiberio** (Tiberius' Leap), a sheer cliff from where Tiberius had out-of-favour subjects hurled into the sea.

A 1.5km walk from the villa, down Via Tiberio and Via Maternà, is the **Arco Naturale** (Map p643), a huge rock arch formed by the pounding sea.

**ANACAPRI & AROUND**

Coming up from Capri Town, the bus deposits you in Piazza Vittoria, from where it's



a short walk to **Villa San Michele di Axel Munthe** (Map p643; ☎ 081 837 14 01; Via Axel Munthe; admission €5; 🕒 9am-6pm May-Sep, 10.30am-3.30pm Nov-Feb, 9.30am-4.30pm Mar, 9.30am-5pm Apr & Oct), the former home of self-aggrandising Swedish doctor Axel Munthe. The story behind the villa, built on the ruined site of a Roman villa, is told by Munthe himself in his autobiography *The Story of San Michele* (1929). Other than the collection of Roman sculpture, the villa's best feature is the beautifully preserved gardens and their superb views.

Beyond the villa, Via Axel Munthe continues to the 800-step stairway leading down to Capri Town. Built in the early 19th century, this was the only link between Anacapri and the rest of the island until the present mountain road was constructed in the 1950s. Traditionally, the people of Capri and Anacapri have been at loggerheads and they are always ready to trot out their respective patron saints to ward off the *malocchio* (evil eye) of their rivals.

From Piazza Vittoria, the **seggiovia** (chair lift; Map p645; ☎ 081 837 14 28; single/return €5.50/7; 🕒 9.30am-5pm Mar-Oct, 10.30am-3pm Nov-Feb) carries you to the summit of **Monte Solaro** (589m),

Capri's highest point. The views from the top are outstanding – on a clear day you can see the entire Bay of Naples and the islands of Ischia and Procida.

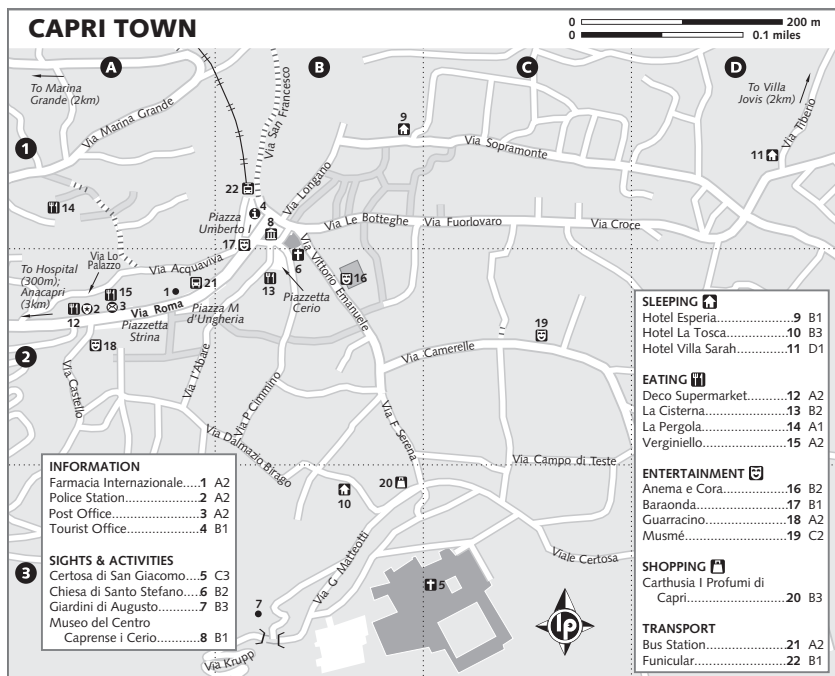
Rising above Punta Carena, Capri's rugged southwesterly point, is the **Faro** (Map p643), Italy's second-tallest and most powerful lighthouse. From Anacapri a bus runs to the Faro every 20 minutes in summer and every 40 minutes in winter.

## GROTTA AZZURRA

Capri's single most famous attraction is the **Grotta Azzurra** (Blue Grotto; Map p643; admission €4; 🕒 9am-1hr before sunset), a stunning sea cave illuminated by an otherworldly blue light.

Long known to local fishermen, it was rediscovered by two Germans, Augustus Kopisch and Ernst Fries, in 1826. Subsequent research, however, revealed that Emperor Tiberius had built a quay in the cave around AD 30, complete with a *nymphaeum*. You can still see the carved Roman landing stage towards the rear of the cave.

Far from being an overblown tourist attraction, the grotto's iridescent blue light is pure



magic. It's caused by the refraction of sunlight off the sides of the 1.3m-high entrance, coupled with the reflection off the white sandy bottom.

A return trip to the grotto costs €19, comprising the motorboat to the cave (€10), a rowing boat into the cave (€5) and admission fee (€4); allow a good hour. The singing 'captains' are included in the price, so don't feel any obligation if they push for a tip.

The grotto is closed if the sea is too choppy so, before embarking, check that it's open at the Marina Grande tourist office.

## Activities

Marina Grande is the hub of Capri's thriving water-sports business. **Sercomar** (Map p643; ☎ 081 837 87 81; www.caprisub.com; Via Colombo 64; ☹ closed Nov) offers various diving packages, costing from €100 for a single dive to €350 for a beginners' course.

Operating out of a kiosk to the west of the port, **Banana Sport** (Map p643; ☎ 081 837 51 88; ☹ mid-Apr–Oct) hires out motorised dinghies for €75 for two hours or €160 for the day. Here you can also pick up a boat to the **Bagno**

**di Tiberio** (Map p643), a popular swimming spot west of Marina Grande. It's said that Tiberius once swam here, although he wouldn't have had to pay €7.50 to access the private beach as you will. Other swimming spots include Punta Carena near the lighthouse and the small pebbly beach at Marina Piccola. At Marina Piccola you can hire canoes at **Bagni di Gioia** (Map p643; ☎ 081 837 77 02) and **Bagni Lo Scoglio delle Sirene** (Map p643; ☎ 081 837 02 21) for about €12/7 per hour for a double/single canoe.

Capri also offers some memorable hiking. Favourite routes link the Arco Naturale with Punta di Tragara and Monte Solaro with Anacapri. Running along the island's oft-overlooked western coast, the Sentiero dei Fortini (Path of the Small Forts) leads from Punta Carena up to the Grotta Azzurra.

## Sleeping

Capri's accommodation is top heavy, with plenty of four- and five-star hotels but few budget options. Cheaper *pensioni* do exist but they tend to be at the top of their price bracket. Although there are a growing number of B&Bs, they rarely constitute much of a saving. As a general rule, the further you go from Capri Town, the less you'll pay. Camping is forbidden.

Always book ahead. Hotel space is at a premium during the summer and many places close in winter, typically between November and March.

## MARINA GRANDE

**Pensione Italia** (Map p643; ☎ 081 837 06 02; www.pensioneitaliacapri.com; Via Marina Grande 204; s €55-95, d €65-125; ☹ Apr–Nov) A modest, homely *pensione*, the Italia offers few frills. The reception is decorated with family knick-knacks and yellowing postcards while rooms have high ceilings and old-fashioned wardrobes and beds.

**Belvedere e Tre Re** (Map p643; ☎ 081 837 03 45; www.belvedere-tre-re.com; Via Marina Grande 238; r €80-150; ☹ Apr–Nov; ☹) It's difficult to miss this friendly, old-school hotel thanks to its rusty red walls. The simple rooms sport white walls, tiled floors and unexciting furniture but they are all large and the best have terraces overlooking the sea.

## CAPRI TOWN

**Hotel La Tosca** (Map p644; ☎ 081 837 09 89; www.latoscahotel.com; Via Dalmazio Birago 5; s €45-85, d €65-130;



(☞) Apr-Oct; (☞) La Tosca is one of the island's top budget options. Hidden away down a quiet back lane, it offers 11 sparkling white rooms, some with sea views, all furnished with unfussy simplicity. The owner, a genial guy, extends a warm welcome. It's a popular choice so book ahead.

**Pensione Guarracino** (Map p643; ☎ /fax 081 837 71 40; guarracino@capri.it; Via Mulo 13; s €70-85, d €90-115; ☞) A short walk from the centre of Capri Town and within easy striking distance of Marina Piccola, this small, family-run *pensione* has 13 modest rooms, each decked out with a comfy bed, decent shower and independent air-con. No credit cards.

**Hotel Villa Sarah** (Map p644; ☎ 081 837 06 89; www.villasarah.it; Via Tiberio 3a; s €80-130, d €130-200; ☞) Easter-Oct; ☞) Villa Sarah retains a rustic appeal that so many of the island's hotels have long lost. Surrounded by its own fruit-producing gardens, it has 19 airy rooms, all decorated in classical local style with ceramic tiles and old-fashioned furniture. Best of all, though, is the small swimming pool.

**Hotel Esperia** (Map p644; ☎ 081 837 02 62; fax 081 837 09 33; Via Sopramonte 41; r €130-200; ☞) Apr-Oct; ☞) The Esperia exudes fading charm. It's a short uphill walk from the centre of town, housed in a 19th-century villa, complete with peeling façade, handsome columns and giant urns, and boasts large, airy rooms with modern furniture and a floral theme. The best have terraces with sea views.

## ANACAPRI

**Hotel Bussola di Hermes** (Map p643; ☎ 081 838 20 10; www.bussolahermes.com; Traversa La Vigna 14; s €40-70, d €80-120, q €140-180; ☞) A warm welcome awaits at this hospitable outpost just outside the main town. Rooms are sunny and modern with flat-screen TVs, white walls and blue marble floors. For a sea view you'll pay an extra €10. To get here take the bus up to Piazza Vittoria and call for the hotel shuttle service.

**ourpick Hotel Villa Eva** (Map p643; ☎ 081 837 15 49; www.villaeva.com; Via La Fabbrica 8; s €50-80, d €90-120; ☞) Mar-Oct; ☞) A rural retreat, Villa Eva is a gem. Hidden among fruit trees, rooms feature unusual trappings, including a tiled fireplace, a brick well, domed ceilings and a boxed radio (room 6). It also has a swimming pool, a snack bar and treetop views down to the sea. The only drawback is that it's not easy to get to – take the Grotta

Azzurra bus from Anacapri and ask the driver where to get off or cough up €30 for a portside pick-up.

## Eating

Traditional food served in traditional trattorias is what you'll find on Capri. The island's culinary gift to the world is *insalata caprese*, a salad of fresh tomato, basil and mozzarella bathed in olive oil. Also look out for *caprese* cheese, a cross between mozzarella and ricotta, and *ravioli caprese*, ravioli stuffed with ricotta and herbs.

Many restaurants, like the hotels, close over winter.

## CAPRI TOWN

**Deco supermarket** (Map p644; Via Roma; ☞) 8am-8.30pm Mon-Sat, 8am-1pm Sun) Next to the police station is this good place to load up with picnic provisions.

**Verginiello** (Map p644; ☎ 081 837 09 44; Via Lo Palazzo 25; meals €20; ☞) daily Apr-Oct, Wed-Mon Dec-Mar) Offering reliable food and grandstand views over Marina Grande, this bustling restaurant is as near to a budget diner as you'll find in Capri Town. Of the pastas, the *spaghetti alle cozze* (spaghetti with mussels) is worth trying; of the mains, the grilled steaks are a dependable choice.

**La Cisterna** (Map p644; ☎ 081 837 56 20; Via M Serafina 5; meals €25; ☞) Mar-Jan) Named after and housed in a 2000-year-old Roman cistern, this unpretentious trattoria is a perennial favourite. Owned by the larger-than-life Salvatore, whose memorable picture adorns the bottles of house wine, it's good for traditional dishes like pasta with beans, veal cutlets and wood-fired pizzas.

**Le Grotelle** (Map p643; ☎ 081 837 57 19; Via Arco Naturale 13; meals €28; ☞) Apr-Oct) As atmospheric a place as you'll find on Capri. About 150m from the Arco Naturale, it has two dining areas: one set in a cave, the other on a terrace perched above a wooded hillside falling down to the sea. The food is traditional – think simple pasta dishes followed by grilled fish, chicken or rabbit.

**La Pergola** (Map p644; ☎ 081 837 74 12; Via Traversa Lo Palazzo 2; meals €30; ☞) Thu-Tue Nov-Sep) The vine-shaded terrace and sea views provide a wonderful setting for La Pergola's delicious, innovative food. The menu comprises all the Capri classics plus a number of more modern dishes such as *paccheri con cozze*, *patate e*

*peperoncino* (large pasta rings with mussels, potatoes and chilli).

### ANACAPRI

**Trattoria Il Solitario** (Map p645; ☎ 081 837 13 82; Via G Orlandi 96; pizzas from €4.50, meals €20; ☞ Apr-Oct) One of the better trattorias in the heart of Anacapri's touristy centre, Il Solitario serves large helpings of tasty local food at honest prices. It's a relaxed place with a young staff and tables laid out in an inviting green backyard. Book ahead on summer weekends.

**La Rondinella** (Map p645; ☎ 081 837 12 23; Via G Orlandi 295; meals €28) One of Anacapri's most consistently good restaurants – apparently Graham Greene was a fan – La Rondinella has a relaxed, rural feel. Sit down to Italian classics such as *saltimbocca alla Romana* (veal slices with ham and sage) or *gnocchi alla sorrentina* (gnocchi baked in tomato sauce with mozzarella).

**Le Arcate** (Map p645; ☎ 081 837 33 25; Via de Tommaso 24; pizzas from €5.50, meals €28) This is an unpretentious restaurant with a large covered terrace, flowering hanging baskets and sunny yellow tablecloths. It specialises in delicious pizza and *primi* (first courses). The *risotto con funghi porcini e salsiccia* (risotto with porcini mushrooms and sausage) is a tasty case in point.

### Entertainment

Capri's nightlife is a showy business. The main activity is dressing up and hanging out, ideally on Capri Town's Piazzetta. There are few nightclubs to speak of and only several upmarket taverns. Most places open around 10pm and charge anywhere between €20 and €30 for admission.

In Capri Town, celebs head for the self-styled tavern **Anema e Cora** (Map p644; ☎ 081 837 64 61; Via Sella Orta 39e), the island's most famous nightspot. **Guarracino** (Map p644; ☎ 081 837 05 14; Via Castello 7) offers more of the same.

For something racier, run the gauntlet of bouncers outside **Musmé** (Map p644; ☎ 081 837 60 11; Via Camerelle 61b) or join the younger crowd dancing to hip-hop, house and revival at **Baraonda** (Map p644; ☎ 081 837 25 23; Via Roma 6).

Up in Anacapri, **Underground** (Map p645; ☎ 081 837 25 23; Via G Orlandi 259) attracts a mixed crowd with its funk and house nights and festive beach parties. Nearby, **Caffè Michelangelo** (Map p645; Via G Orlandi 138) is a laid-back café good for people-watching.

### Shopping

If you're not in the market for a new Rolex or Prada bag look out for the ceramic work and anything lemony; in particular, lemon-scented perfume and *limoncello*. For the former try **Carthusia I Profumi di Capri** (Map p644; ☎ 081 837 03 68; Viale Parco Augusto 2c) in Capri Town; for the latter go up to Anacapri and **Limoncello Capri** (Map p645; Via Capodimonte 27), the birthplace of *limoncello*. Apparently, the grandmother of current owner Vivica made the tot as an after-dinner treat for the guests in her hotel, some 100 years ago.

If you *are* in the market for a new Rolex or Prada bag, head to Via Vittorio Emanuele and Via Camerelle.

### Getting There & Away

See Naples (p635) and Sorrento (p660) for details of year-round ferries and hydrofoils to the island.

In summer hydrofoils connect with Positano (€15.50), Amalfi (€16), Salerno (€16.50) and Ischia (€15.50).

Note that some companies require you to pay a small supplement for luggage, typically around €1.50.

### Getting Around

The best way to get around Capri is by bus. There's no car-hire service on the island and between March and October you can bring a vehicle to the island only if it's registered outside Italy or hired at an international airport.

Operating from Capri Town bus station, **Sippic** (☎ 081 837 04 20) runs regular buses to/from Marina Grande, Anacapri and Marina Piccola. It also operates buses from Marina Grande to Anacapri and from Marina Piccola to Anacapri.

From Anacapri bus terminal, **Staiano Autotrasporti** (☎ 081 837 24 22; www.staiano-capri.com) buses serve the Grotta Azzurra and Faro.

Single tickets cost €1.30 on all routes, as does the funicular that links Marina Grande with Capri Town.

You can hire a scooter from **Rent A Scooter** (Map p643; ☎ 081 837 79 41; Via Marina Grande 280) at Marina Grande. Rates are about €15 per hour or €65 per day.

From Marina Grande, a **taxi** (☎ in Capri Town 081 837 05 43, in Anacapri 081 837 11 75) costs around €20 to Capri and €25 to Anacapri; from Capri to Anacapri costs about €15.

## ISCHIA

pop 59,900

The biggest and busiest island in the bay, Ischia is a bubbling concoction of sprawling spa towns, mud-wrapped Germans, subtropical gardens and ancient booty. Famous for its thermal waters, it boasts some fine beaches and spectacular scenery.

Most visitors stay on the touristy north coast, but go inland and you'll find a rural landscape of chestnut forests, dusty farms and earthy hillside towns. On the tranquil south coast, Sant'Angelo is a blissful blend of twisting lanes, cosy harbour and bubbling beaches.

### History

Ischia was one of the first Greek colonies in the 8th century BC, named Pithekoussai after the *pithos* (pottery clay) found there. An important stop on the trade route from Greece to northern Italy, it was renamed Aenaria by the Romans. In 1301 an eruption of the now-extinct (and unfortunately named) Monte Arso forced the inhabitants to flee to the mainland, where many stayed permanently.

The Spanish took the island in 1495 and ruled until a brief French occupation in the early 19th century. The English attacked in 1806, sparking fierce fighting and the bombardment of the Castello Aragonese – the scars are still evident today. Like so many of these islands, Ischia was a political prison during the 19th century.

### Orientation

Ferries dock at Ischia Porto, the main gateway and tourist hub. The bus station is a one-minute walk west of the pier, with buses servicing all other parts of the island. East of the pier, shopping strip Via Roma eventually becomes Corso Vittoria Colonna and heads 2km southeast to Ischia Ponte.

### Information

**Bay Watch** (☎ 081 333 10 96; Via Iasolino 37, Ischia Porto) Arranges accommodation and tour bookings.

**Ischia Online** ([www.ischiaonline.it](http://www.ischiaonline.it)) Website with hotels, sights, activities and events.

**Tourist office** (☎ 081 507 42 11; [www.infoischiaprovida.it](http://www.infoischiaprovida.it); Via Sogliuzzo 72, Ischia Porto; ☎ 9am-2pm & 3-8pm Mon-Sat)

### Sights & Activities

Ischia's most famous landmark, the **Castello Aragonese** (☎ 081 99 28 34; Rocca del Castello; admission

€10; ☎ 9am-7pm Apr-Oct, 10am-5pm Nov-Mar), sits on a rocky islet just off Ischia Ponte. A sprawling complex comprising a 14th-century cathedral and several smaller churches, it largely dates to the 1400s, when King Alfonso of Aragon gave an older Angevin fortress a makeover. Inside, the **Museo delle Armi** (Weaponry Museum) has a curious collection of torture tools, kinky illustrations and medieval armoury.

Over on the west coast, Ischia's own Garden of Eden can be found at **La Mortella** (☎ 081 98 62 20; [www.lamortella.it](http://www.lamortella.it); Via F Calese 39, Forio; admission €10; ☎ 9am-7pm Tue, Thu, Sat & Sun Apr-Nov). More than 1000 rare and exotic plants flourish in the grounds, designed by Russell Page and inspired by the Moorish gardens of Granada's Alhambra in Spain. They were established by Sir William Walton, the late British composer, and his wife, who made La Mortella their home in 1949. Classical music concerts are staged in the gardens in spring and autumn.

A strenuous uphill walk from the village of Fontana brings you to the top of **Monte Epomeo** (788m), the island's highest point, with superb views of the Bay of Naples. The little church near the top is the 15th-century **Cappella di San Nicola di Bari**, which features a pretty majolica floor.

Unlike Capri, Ischia boasts some great beaches. From chic Sant'Angelo on the south coast, water taxis reach the sandy **Spiaggia dei Maronti** (€3 one way) and the intimate cove of **Il Sorgeto** (€5 one way), with its steamy thermal spring. Sorgeto can also be reached on foot down a poorly signposted path from the village of Panza.

If you fancy a dive, **Captain Cook** (☎ 335 636 26 30; Via Iasolino 106, Ischia Porto) has equipment for hire and runs courses. A single dive will typically cost from €35. **West Coast** (☎ 081 90 86 04; Via Marina, Forio) provides full- and half-day hire of motorised boats and dinghies.

### Sleeping

Most hotels close in winter, and prices normally drop considerably in those that stay open.

**Camping Mirage** (☎ 081 99 05 51; [www.campingmirage.it](http://www.campingmirage.it); Via Maronti 37, Spiaggia dei Maronti, Barano d'Ischia; camp sites per person/tent €11/10; (P)) On Spiaggia dei Maronti is this shady camp site with pitches under a welcome panoply of eucalyptus trees. On-site facilities include showers, a laundry, a bar and a restaurant serving great seafood pasta.



**Il Gabbiano** (☎ /fax 081 90 94 22; SS Forio-Panza 162, Forio; B&B per person €17; ☞ Apr-Oct; 📺) Ischia's HI hostel has monastic bedrooms sleeping two, four or six, all with small balconies and sea views. There's also a swimming pool that might or might not have water in it. Road noise and mosquitoes can be a nuisance.

**Hotel Conchiglia** (☎ 081 99 92 70; www.conchigliahotel.it; Via Chiaia delle Rose, Sant'Angelo; B&B per person €30-60) Just behind Sant'Angelo's people-watching piazza, is this charming and excellent value hotel. Rooms are cosy and the kitsch art and plastic flowers add to its raffish charm. The buffet breakfast is served on the restaurant's waterfront terrace.

**Hotel Semiramis** (☎ 081 90 75 11; www.hotelsemiramischia.it; Spiaggia di Citara, Forio; B&B per person €47-69; ☞ Apr-Oct; (P) 📺 📺) This bright, friendly hotel has a tropical-oasis feel with its central pool surrounded by palms. Rooms, the best of which have distant sea views, are large and beautifully tiled in the traditional yellow-and-turquoise pattern.

**Hotel La Sirenella** (☎ 081 99 47 43; www.lasirenella.net; Corso Angelo Rizzoli 41, Lacco Ameno; B&B per person €55-70; ☞ Apr-Oct; 📺) This welcoming beachfront hotel in Lacco Ameno is a family-run place offering sunny rooms, beach views and a bright, breezy atmosphere. Stifle your hunger pangs with a pizza at the downstairs restaurant.

**Hotel Casa Celestino** (☎ 081 99 92 13; www.casacelestino.it; Via Chiaia delle Rose, Sant'Angelo; s €100-110, d €160-200; ☞ Jan-Oct; 📺 📺) This chic Sant'Angelo hotel is a soothing blend of creamy furnishings, white-washed walls, contemporary art and terracotta highlights. The bedrooms boast majolica-tiled floors, modern bathrooms and enviable balconies overlooking the sea.

## Eating

Seafood aside, Ischia is famed for its rabbit, which is bred on inland farms. Another local speciality is *rucolino* – a green, liquorice-flavoured liqueur made from rucola leaves.

**Zi Carmela** (☎ 081 99 84 23; Via Schioppa 27, Forio; meals €23; ☞ Apr-Oct) Zi Carmela is a Forio favourite known for its excellent seafood, local rabbit dishes and wood-fired pizzas. Eat in the sunny dining room, decorated with copper pans, ceramic mugs and strings of garlic, or on the terrace overlooking the port.

**Lo Scoglio** (☎ 081 99 95 29; Via Cava Ruffano 58, Sant'Angelo; meals €30; ☞ closed Jan-Mar & mid-Nov-mid-Dec) Dramatically jutting out over the sea beside a pretty beach cove, is this great place for

seafood. The ingredients are as fresh as the day's catch, appearing in dishes like mussel soup and grilled sea bass. Sunday lunchtime is a popular weekly event.

**La Baia el Clipper** (☎ 081 333 42 09; Via Porto 116, Ischia Porto; meals €40) Spruce up for a meal at one of the best restaurants along Ischia Porto's busy waterfront. Not surprisingly, seafood dominates the menu – there's linguine with scampi and grilled fish – although you'll also find a range of tasty (and cheaper) meat dishes.

## Getting There & Away

See p635 for details of hydrofoils and ferries to/from Naples. You can also catch hydrofoils direct to Capri (€15.50) and Procida (€6.95).

## Getting Around

The main bus station is in Ischia Porto. There are two principal lines: the CS (Circo Sinistra; Left Circle) and CD (Circo Destra; Right Circle), which circle the island in opposite directions, passing through each town and leaving every 30 minutes. Buses pass near all hotels and camp sites. A single ticket, valid for 90 minutes, costs €1.20, while a ticket valid from 6am to 6pm is €4. Taxis and microtaxi (scooter-engined three-wheelers) are also available.

You can do the island a favour by not bringing your car. If you want to hire a car or scooter, there are plenty of rental firms, including **Fratelli del Franco** (☎ 081 99 13 34; Via A De Luca 127, Ischia Ponte), which hires out cars (from €32 per day), mopeds (€25 to €35) and mountain bikes (around €10 per day). You can't take a rented vehicle off the island.

## PROCIDA

pop 10,700

Mercifully off the mass-tourist radar, Procida is the smallest, least spectacular and most genuine of the Bay's three islands. August aside – when beach-bound mainlanders flock to its shores – it's a quiet place where life goes on largely undisturbed by outsiders.

The island makes a lovely first impression with colourful cubic houses crowding the waterfront as if posing for a shambolic group photo. Further exploration of the island does little to detract from this evocative image.

## Orientation & Information

Marina Grande is the hop-off point for ferries and hydrofoils, and forms most of the tourist showcase. Here, **Graziella Travel Agency**

(☎ 081 896 95 94; www.isoladiprocida.it; Via Roma 117; ☹ 9.30am-1pm & 4.30-8pm Mon-Sat) can organise accommodation, boat trips (about €15 for a two-hour tour) and bicycle hire. It also has a good free map of the island. The **tourist office** (☎ 081 896 96 28; Via Vittorio Emanuele 173; www.procida.net; ☹ 9am-1pm & 3-7pm Mon-Sat) is a short, uphill walk from the port.

## Sights & Activities

The best way to explore the island – a mere 4 sq km – is on foot or by bike. However, the island's narrow roads can be clogged with cars – one of its few drawbacks.

Clinging onto Procida's highest point is the crumbling 16th-century **Castello d'Avalos**, a former Bourbon hunting lodge and ex-prison. Next door, the **Abbazia di San Michele Arcangelo** (☎ 081 896 76 12; Via Terra Murata 89; admission €2; ☹ 9.45am-12.45pm & 3-6pm Mon-Sat), a one-time Benedictine abbey, contains a church, a small museum with some arresting paintings, and a honeycomb of catacombs.

From panoramic Piazza dei Martiri, the village of **Corricella** tumbles down to its marina in a riot of pinks, yellows and whites. Further south, a steep flight of steps leads down to **Chiaia** beach, one of the island's most beautiful.

All pink, white and blue, little **Marina di Chiaiolella** features a yacht-stocked marina, old-school eateries and a languid disposition. Nearby the **Lido** is a popular beach.

The **Procida Diving Centre** (☎ 081 896 83 85; www.vacanzeaprocida.it; Via Cristoforo Colombo 6) runs diving courses and hires out equipment. Budget €32 for a single dive, €60 for a full day. You can charter a yacht from **Blue Dream** (☎ 081 896 05 79, 339 572 08 74; www.bluedreamcharter.com; Via Ottimo 3) from €60 per person per day.

## Festivals & Events

Good Friday sees a colourful **procession of the Misteri**. A wooden statue of Christ and the Madonna Addolorata, along with life-sized tableaux of plaster and papier-mâché illustrating events leading to Christ's crucifixion, are carted across the island. Men dress in blue tunics with white hoods, while many of the young girls dress as the Madonna.

## Sleeping

**Hotel Celeste** (☎ 081 896 74 88; www.hotelceleste.it; Via Rivoli 6, Marina di Chiaiolella; s €40-70, d €60-110; ☹ Apr-Sep; ♻) The Celeste, a bright, eco-friendly hotel overlooking sweet orange groves, boasts

the island's first solar panels. Rooms differ in look – some are white, some are yellow – but all are pristine, light and comfortable. Outside there's a home-style garden and a solarium.

**Casa Giovanni da Procida** (☎ 081 896 03 58; www.casagiovannidaprocida.it; Via Giovanni da Procida 3; r €65-130; ☹ closed Feb; ♻) This smart farmhouse B&B basks in the shade of a centuries-old magnolia tree and features split-level rooms with low-rise beds and contemporary furniture. Bathrooms are slick, with funky mosaic tiling and cool cube basins.

**Hotel La Corricella** (☎ /fax 081 896 75 75; Via Marina Corricella 88; r €90-120; ☹ Apr-Oct) A shocking-pink outfit on Marina Corricella is this sun-washed hotel which has 10 uncluttered rooms with cool tiles and blonde-wood beds. The large shared terrace boasts topnotch harbour views, the restaurant serves decent seafood and a boat service reaches the nearby beach.

Camp sites are dotted around the island and open from April to October. Typical prices are €10 per site plus €10 per person. Reliable places include **Vivara** (☎ 081 896 92 42; Via IV Novembre) and **La Caravella** (☎ 081 810 18 38; Via IV Novembre).

## Eating

**Graziella** (☎ 081 896 74 79; Via Marina Corricella 14; meals €15; ☹ Mar-Oct) A lovely waterfront trattoria with home-style cooking and an appealing nautical atmosphere made all the more real by the well-fed cats and piles of fishing nets. Slurp on *zuppa di pesce* (fish soup) as you watch boats pootle around in the marina.

**La Conchiglia** (☎ 081 896 76 02; Via Pizzaco 10; meals €28; ☹ Mar-Oct) Topaz waves at your feet, pastel Corricella in the distance – this is what you come to Procida for. Up against the views, the food holds its own with dishes such as *spaghetti alla povera* (spaghetti with chilli, green peppers, cherry tomatoes and anchovies). To get here, take the steep steps down from Via Pizzaco.

**Il Galeone** (☎ 081 896 96 22; Via Marina di Chiaiolella; meals €30) Il Galeone is housed in an unlikely chalet-style pavilion on Marina di Chiaiolella. It has a large wooden deck and is a good bet for fresh-off-the-boat *frutti di mare* (seafood). For something with a bit of pep in it go for the homemade pasta with *calamaretti* (little squids) and *peperoni dolci* (sweet peppers).

## Getting There & Around

Procida is linked by boat and hydrofoil to Ischia (€6.95), Pozzuoli (€6.95) and Naples (see p635).



the ruins – follow the signs for the *scavi* (excavations) down the main street, Via IV Novembre. En route, you'll pass the **tourist office** (☎ /fax 081 788 12 43; Via IV Novembre 82; ☎ 9am–2.45pm Mon–Sat) on your right.

## Sights

Covering 4.5 hectares, the **ruins** (☎ 081 739 09 63; www.pompeiiites.org; adult/EU citizen 18–25yr €11/5.50, incl Pompeii & 3 minor sites €20/10, audioguide €6.50; ☎ 8.30am–7.30pm Apr–Oct, last entry 6pm, 8.30am–5pm Nov–Mar, last entry 3.30pm) are easily visited in a morning.

From the **site information office** (☎ 8.30am–3pm) by the ticket office pick up a free map and guide booklet before heading down the wide boulevard to the ruins' actual entrance, on the right shortly after the road curves round.

To enter the ruins you pass through what appears to be a moat around the town but is in fact the ancient shoreline. It was here in 1980 that archaeologists discovered some 300 skeletons, the remains of a crowd that had fled to the beach only to be overcome by boiling surge clouds sweeping down from Vesuvius.

Marking the site's southernmost tip, the 1st-century-AD **Terme Suburbane** (Suburban Baths; closed for restoration) is one of the best-preserved bath complexes in existence, with deep pools, stucco friezes and bas-reliefs looking down upon marble seats and floors.

Nearby, and accessible from Cardo V, **Casa dei Cervi** (House of the Deer) is an imposing example of a Roman noble family's house. The two-storey villa, built around a central courtyard, contains murals and still-life paintings. In the courtyard is a diminutive pair of marble deer assailed by dogs and an engaging statue of a peeing Hercules.

Continuing up Cardo V, turn left into the Decumano Inferiore for the **Casa del Gran Portale**, whose main entrance is flanked by elegant brick Corinthian columns. Inside are some well-preserved wall paintings.

To the southwest, on Cardo IV, the **Casa dell'atrio a Mosaico** (House of the Mosaic Atrium; closed for restoration) is an impressive mansion with extensive floor mosaics, including a black-and-white chess-board design in the atrium.

For even more impressive mosaics head up Cardo IV to the **Casa di Nettuno e Anfritrite** (House of Neptune and Amphitrite), named after the extraordinary mosaic in the *nymphaeum*.

Over the road, the **Terme Femminili** was the women's section of the **Terme del Foro** (Forum

Baths) – the male half, the **Terme Maschili**, is behind, accessible from Cardo III. While women passed from the *apodyterium* (changing rooms – note the finely executed naked figure of Triton on the mosaic floor) through the *tepidarium* (warm room) to the *caldarium* (hot room), men had the added bracing option of the *frigidarium* (a cold bath).

At the top of Cardo IV, a crucifix found in an upstairs room of the **Casa del Bicentenario** (Bicentenary House) provides possible evidence of a Christian presence in pre-Vesuvius Herculaneum.

Virtually the last house before the exit, **Casa d'Argo** (Argus House) is a well-preserved example of a Roman noble family's house, complete with porticoed garden and *triclinium* (dining area).

Northwest of the ruins, **Villa dei Papiri** was a vast four-storey, 245m-long complex owned by Julius Caesar's father-in-law. To visit the villa, of which only the atrium and parts of the upper floors are open, you need to book online at www.arethusa.net. Visits are on Saturdays and Sundays between 9am and noon.

## Sleeping & Eating

You're unlikely to want to stay overnight at Ercolano – there's not much to see other than the ruins and it's an easy rail journey from Naples or Sorrento.

If you want to grab a bite, **La Fornacella** (☎ 081 777 48 61; Via IV Novembre 90–92; set menu €7), next to the tourist office, dishes up a decent lunchtime menu with dishes like *pollo alla cacciatora* (chicken baked with tomatoes and paprika) and grilled vegetables.

## Getting There & Away

The best way to get to Ercolano is by Circum-vesuviana train (get off at Ercolano-Scavi). Trains run regularly to/from Naples (€1.70), Pompeii (€1.30) and Sorrento (€1.80).

By car take the A3 from Naples, exit at Ercolano Portico and follow the signs to car parks near the site's entrance.

## MT VESUVIUS

Towering darkly over Naples and its environs, Mt Vesuvius (Vesuvio; 1281m) is the only active volcano on the European mainland. Since it exploded into history in AD 79, burying Pompeii and Herculaneum and pushing the coastline out several kilometres, it has erupted more than 30 times. The most devastating of these

## IN THE LINE OF FIRE

A ticking time bomb, Vesuvius is a constant threat. In an attempt to clear the volcano's lower slopes, the Campania region launched Progetto Vesuvia in September 2003, offering a €30,000 carrot to anyone prepared to relocate. The first payout took place in July 2004 and, to date, almost 6000 applications have been received.

But the authorities face an uphill task. Even with the payout, many people simply can't afford to move – €30,000 will only buy about a quarter of a new two-bedroom flat – and many farmers are reluctant to give up the area's rich volcanic soil.

In the event of an eruption, emergency plans call for the evacuation of 600,000 people from 18 municipalities in the so-called red zone. However, critics claim that these plans are not enough to cope with a worst-case scenario. Recent geological research has revealed evidence in Naples of a massive Stone Age eruption, far worse than that which destroyed Pompeii. If such an eruption struck today up to three million people could find themselves in the line of fire.

was in 1631, the most recent in 1944. And while there's little evidence to suggest any imminent activity, observers worry that the current lull is the longest in the past 500 years.

A full-scale eruption would be catastrophic. Some 600,000 people live within 7km of the crater and despite incentives to relocate (see above) few are willing to go.

Today, Vesuvius is better protected than many of the towns beneath it. The **Parco Nazionale del Vesuvio** ([www.vesuvioparco.it](http://www.vesuvioparco.it)) was established in 1995 and today attracts some 400,000 visitors annually.

From a car park at the summit, an 860m path leads up to the **crater** (admission €6.50; ☎ 9am-6.30pm daily Jun-Aug, 9am-5.30pm Apr-May, 9am-5pm Sep-Oct, 9am-3pm Jan-Mar & Nov-Dec, ticket office closes 1hr before the crater). It's not a strenuous walk but it's more comfortable in trainers than in sandals or flip-flops. You'd also do well to take sunglasses – useful against swirling ash – and a sweater, as it can be chilly up top, even in summer.

About halfway up the hill, the **Museo dell'Osservatorio Vesuviano** (Museum of the Vesuvian Observatory; ☎ 081 610 84 83; [www.ov.ingv.it](http://www.ov.ingv.it) in Italian; admission free; ☎ 10am-2pm Sat & Sun) tells the history of 2000 years of Vesuvius-watching.

The easiest way to visit Vesuvius is to get a bus from Pompeii up to the crater car park. **Vesuviana Mobilità** (☎ 081 963 44 20) operates eight (10 in summer) return-trip buses daily from Piazza Anfiteatro. Journey time is one hour each way and return tickets cost €8.60.

From Ercolano there are only two buses, departing from Via Panoramica (about 50m from the train station) at 8.25am and 12.45pm and returning at 1.55pm and 4.30pm. Return tickets, available on board, cost €7.60 for the 90-minute round trip.

**Vesuvio Express** (☎ 081 739 36 66; [www.vesuvioexpress.it](http://www.vesuvioexpress.it); Piazzale Stazione Circumvesuviana 8, Ercolano) operates minibus-taxis to the summit car park from outside Ercolano-Scavi train station. The ride costs €10 (€16.50 including crater admission) and buses depart when they are full (or overfull as is sometimes the case).

By car, exit the A3 at Ercolano Portico and follow signs for the Parco Nazionale del Vesuvio.

Note that when weather conditions are bad the summit path is shut and bus departures are suspended.

## POMPEII

pop 25,800

A stark reminder of the malign forces that lie deep inside Vesuvius, Pompeii (Pompeii in Italian) is Europe's most compelling archaeological site and one of Italy's most visited tourist attractions. Each year about 2.5 million people pour in to wander the ghostly shell of what was once a thriving commercial centre.

Its appeal goes beyond tourism, though. From an archaeological point of view, it's priceless. Much of the value lies in the fact that it wasn't simply blown away by Vesuvius: rather it was buried under a layer of lapilli (burning pumice stone), as Pliny the Younger describes in his celebrated account of the eruption.

About 1km down the road in modern Pompeii, the Santuario della Madonna del Rosario is a famous pilgrim destination.

## History

The eruption of Vesuvius wasn't the first disaster to strike the Roman port of Pompeii.

In AD 63, a massive earthquake hit the city, causing widespread damage and the evacuation of much of the 20,000-strong population. Many had not returned when Vesuvius blew its top on 24 August AD 79, burying the city under a layer of lapilli and killing some 2000 men, women and children.

The origins of Pompeii are uncertain, but it seems likely that it was founded in the 7th century BC by the Campanian Oscans. Over the next seven centuries the city fell to the ancient Greeks and the Samnites before becoming a Roman colony in 80 BC.

After its catastrophic demise, Pompeii receded from the public eye until 1594, when the architect Domenico Fontana stumbled across the ruins while digging a canal. However, short of recording the find, he took no further action.

Exploration proper began in 1748 under the Bourbon king Charles VII and continued into the 19th century. In the early days many of the more spectacular mosaics were siphoned off to decorate Charles' palace in Portici; thankfully, though, most were subsequently moved up to Naples, where they now sit in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale (p625).

Work continues today and although new discoveries are being made – in 2000 road-works revealed a whole frescoed leisure area – the emphasis is now on restoring what has already been unearthed rather than raking for new finds.

## Orientation

The Circumvesuviana train drops you at Pompeii–Scavi–Villa dei Misteri station, beside the main Porta Marina entrance. By car, signs direct you from the A3 to the *scavi* and car parks. Modern Pompeii is 1km away down Via Plinio.

## Information

**First-aid post** (☎ 081 535 91 11; Via Colle San Bartolomeo 50)

**Police station** (Piazza Porta Marina Inferiore)

**Pompeii Sites** ([www.pompeiiites.org](http://www.pompeiiites.org)) Comprehensive website covering Pompeii and Herculaneum.

**Post office** (☎ 081 861 09 58; Piazza Esedra)

**Tourist office** Porta Marina (☎ 081 536 32 93; [www.pompeiturismo.it](http://www.pompeiturismo.it); Piazza Porta Marina Inferiore 12;

☎ 8am–7pm Mon–Sat Apr–Sep, 8am–3.30pm Mon–Sat Oct–Mar); Pompeii town (☎ 081 850 72 55; Via Sacra 1;

☎ 8am–7pm Mon–Sat Apr–Sep, 8am–3.30pm Mon–Sat Oct–Mar)

## Sights

### THE RUINS

Of Pompeii's original 66 hectares, 44 have now been excavated. Of course, that doesn't mean that you'll have unhindered access to every inch of the Unesco-listed **ruins** (☎ 081 857 53 47; entrances at Porta Marina, Piazza Anfiteatro; adult/EU citizen 18–25yr €11/5.50, incl Herculaneum & 3 minor sites €20/10; ☎ 8.30am–7.30pm Apr–Oct, last entry 6pm, 8.30am–5pm Nov–Mar, last entry 3.30pm). The situation is better than it was but you'll probably still come across areas cordoned off for no apparent reason, the odd stray dog and a noticeable lack of clear signs. Audioguides (€6.50) are a sensible investment and a good guidebook will help – try the €8 *Pompeii* published by Electa Napoli.

If visiting in summer note that there's not much shade onsite, so bring a hat, sunscreen and plenty of water.

To do justice to the site allow at least three or four hours, longer if you want to go into detail.

The site's main entrance is at **Porta Marina**, the most impressive of the seven gates that punctuated the ancient town walls. A busy passageway, now as then, it originally connected the town with the nearby harbour. Immediately on the right as you enter is the 1st-century BC **Tempio di Venere** (Temple of Venus), formerly one of the town's most opulent temples.

Continuing down Via Marina you come to the **basilica**, the 2nd-century-BC seat of the city's law courts and exchange. Opposite, the **Tempio di Apollo** (Temple of Apollo) is the oldest and most important of Pompeii's religious buildings, dating to the 2nd century BC. The grassy **foro** (forum) adjacent to the temple was the city's main piazza – a huge traffic-free rectangle flanked by limestone columns.

North of the forum stands the **Tempio di Giove** (Temple of Jupiter), one of whose two flanking triumphal arches remains, and the **Granai del Foro** (Forum Granary), now used to store hundreds of amphorae and a number of body casts. These casts were made in the late 19th century by pouring plaster into the hollows left by disintegrated bodies. Nearby, the **macellum** was the city's main meat and fish market.

From the market follow Via degli Augustali until Vicolo del Lupanare. Halfway down this narrow alley is the **Lupanare**, the city's only dedicated brothel. A tiny two-storey building



From here, double back along Via dell'Abbondanza and turn right into Via Stabiana to see some of Pompeii's grandest houses. Turn left into Via della Fortuna for the **Casa del Fauno** (House of the Faun), Pompeii's largest private house. Named after the small bronze statue in the *impluvium* (rain tank), it was here that early excavators found Pompeii's greatest mosaics, most of which are now in Naples' Museo Archeologico Nazionale (p625). A couple of blocks away, the **Casa del Poeta Tragico** (House of the Tragic Poet) features the world's first 'beware of the dog' – *cave canem* – warnings. To the north, on Vicolo di Mercurio, the **Casa dei Vettii** is home to a famous depiction of Priapus with his gigantic phallus balanced on a pair of scales.

From here follow the road west and turn right into Via Consolare, which takes you out of the town through **Porta Ercolano**. Continue past **Villa di Diomede**, turn right, and you'll come to the **Villa dei Misteri**, one of the most complete structures left standing in Pompeii. The *Dionysiac Frieze*, the most important fresco still onsite, spans the walls of the large dining room. One of the largest paintings from the ancient world, it depicts the initiation of a bride-to-be into the cult of Dionysus, the Greek god of wine.

The **Museo Vesuviano** (☎ 081 850 72 55; Via Bartolomeo 12; admission free; ☎ 9am-1pm Mon-Fri), located southeast of the excavations, contains an interesting array of artefacts.

### SANTUARIO DELLA MADONNA DEL ROSARIO

Dominating modern Pompeii's centre, the **Santuario della Madonna del Rosario** (Sanctuary of Our Lady of the Rosary; ☎ 081 857 73 70; Piazza Bartolo Longo; ☎ 6.30am-7.30pm Mon-Sat, 5.45am-8.30pm Sun) was consecrated in 1891, some 15 years after the miracle that guaranteed its fame. In 1876 a young girl was cured of epilepsy after praying in front of the painting, *Virgin of the Rosary with Child*, above the main altar. News spread rapidly and to this day the painting is the subject of popular devotion.

The sanctuary is flanked by a freestanding 80m-high **campanile** (bell tower; ☎ 9am-1pm & 3-6pm Sat-Thu).

### Tours

You'll almost certainly be approached by a guide outside the *scavi* ticket office. Authorised guides wear identification tags and belong

to one of five cooperatives: **Cast** (☎ 081 856 42 21), **Casting** (☎ 081 850 07 49), **Gata** (☎ 081 861 56 61), **GEA** (☎ 081 802 89 38) or **Promo Touring** (☎ 081 850 88 55). The official price for a two-hour tour, whether you're alone or in a group, is €100.

### Sleeping

There's really no need to stay overnight in Pompeii. The ruins are best visited on a day trip from Naples, Sorrento or Salerno, and once the excavations close for the day the area around the site becomes decidedly seedy. If you do need to stay, the following places are recommended.

**Camping Spartacus** (☎ 081 862 40 78; www.campingspartacus.it; Via Plinio 117; camp sites per adult/child/tent €6/2.50/3, bungalows from €45; ☎ ☎ ) About 200m from the entrance to the ruins, the Spartacus was the first camp site to open in Pompeii. Pitch your tent in the shade of the towering eucalyptus and pine trees or snuggle down in one of the basic bungalows, all of which come with air-con and private bathroom.

**Ostello Casa del Pellegrino** (☎ /fax 081 850 86 44; pompeii@ostelloonline.org; Via Duca d'Aosta 4; dm €15, f per person €17; ☎ ) Modern Pompeii's pristine HI hostel is housed in a low-rise ex-convent just off the main square. It has good, basic facilities, pleasant grounds and 80 beds divided between single-sex dorms and family rooms. Reservations are required in July and August.

**Motel Villa dei Misteri** (☎ 081 861 35 93; www.vil.ladeimisteri.it; Via Villa dei Misteri 11; s/d €59/70; ☎ ☎ ☎ ) After a hot day trudging round the ruins, a swim is bliss, especially if you can then retire to your poolside room as you can here. There's a mildly scuffed air about the whole place, but the price is right, and the in-house restaurant (set menu €15) is a decent place to eat. Note that air-con costs €9 extra.

### Eating

Most of the restaurants near the ruins are characterless affairs set up for feeding coachloads of tourists. Wander down to the modern town and it's a little better, with a few decent restaurants serving excellent local food.

**Al Gamberone** (☎ 081 850 68 14; Via Piave 36; meals €18; ☎ Wed-Mon) This modest trattoria near Pompeii's main square serves good, no-nonsense food. Expect things like pasta with tomato sauce and nicely grilled meat served with a wedge of lemon. Afterwards, don't be surprised if the owner reaches into her bra to pull out a purse for your change.



**Ristorante Lucullus** (☎ 081 861 30 55; Via Plinio 129; pizzas from €6, meals €25; 🍷 Wed-Mon) Lucullus, one of the better restaurants near the ruins, is set back from the main road down an oleander-fringed drive. It does good pizzas – count on all the usual toppings – as well as pastas and classic meat dishes. Vegetarians will enjoy the choice of mix-and-match *contorni* (side dishes).

If you need a bite on site, there's a perfectly good **canteen** (Via di Mercurio; meals €18) near the Tempio di Giove.

## Getting There & Away

There are frequent Circumvesuviana trains to Pompeii–Scavi–Villa dei Misteri station from Naples (€2.30, 40 minutes) and Sorrento (€1.80, 30 minutes).

Otherwise, **SITA** (☎ 199 73 07 49; www.sita-on-line.it in Italian) operates half-hourly buses to/from Naples (€2.30, 40 minutes) and **CSTP** (☎ 089 48 70 01; www.ctsp.it in Italian) bus 50 runs to/from Salerno (€1.80, one hour).

For Rome, **Marozzi** (☎ 089 87 10 09; www.marozzi.it in Italian) has two daily buses (€16, three hours), departing from Piazza Esedra.

For information on getting to/from Vesuvius see p653.

By car, take the A3 from Naples. Use the Pompeii exit and follow signs to Pompeii Scavi. Car parks (approximately €4 per hour) are clearly marked and vigorously touted.

## SORRENTO

pop 16,600

On paper Sorrento is a place to avoid – a package-holiday centre with few must-see sights, no beach to speak of and a glut of brassy English-style pubs. In reality, it's a strangely appealing place, its laid-back southern Italian charm resisting all attempts to swamp it in souvenir tat and graceless development.

Dating to Greek times and known to Romans as Surrentum, Sorrento's main selling point is its fabulous location. Straddling cliffs that look directly over the Bay of Naples to Mt Vesuvius, it's ideally situated for exploring the surrounding area: to the west, the best of the peninsula's unspoiled countryside and, beyond that, the Amalfi Coast; to the north, Pompeii and the archaeological sites; offshore, the fabled island of Capri.

According to Greek legend, it was in Sorrento's waters that the mythical sirens once lived. Sailors of antiquity were powerless to resist the beautiful song of these charming

maidens-cum-monsters, who would lure them and their ships to their doom. Homer's Ulysses escaped by having his oarsmen plug their ears with wax and by strapping himself to his ship's mast as he sailed past.

## Orientation

Piazza Tasso, bisected by Sorrento's main street, Corso Italia, is the centre of town. It's about a 300m walk northwest of the Circumvesuviana train station, along Corso Italia. From Marina Piccola, where ferries and hydrofoils dock, walk south along Via Marina Piccola then climb about 200 steps to reach the piazza. Corso Italia becomes the SS145 on its way east to Naples and, heading west, changes its name to Via Capò.

## Information

**Hospital** (☎ 081 533 11 11; Corso Italia 1)

**Info Sorrento** (www.infosorrento.it) Extensive website with tourist information on Sorrento and environs.

**Internet Train** (☎ 081 878 57 42; Via degli Aranci 49; per hr €3; 🕒 9.30am–1.30pm & 3.30–10.30pm Mon–Sat, 9.30am–1.30pm & 6–10pm Sun)

**Police station** (☎ 081 807 53 11; Via Capasso 11)

**Post office** (☎ 081 878 14 95; Corso Italia 210)

**Sorrento Info** (☎ 081 807 40 00; Via Tasso 19; internet per hr €4.50; 🕒 10am–1pm & 5–10pm Mon–Sat May–Oct, 9am–1pm & 4–8pm Mon–Sat Nov–Apr) Office providing tourist information and internet access.

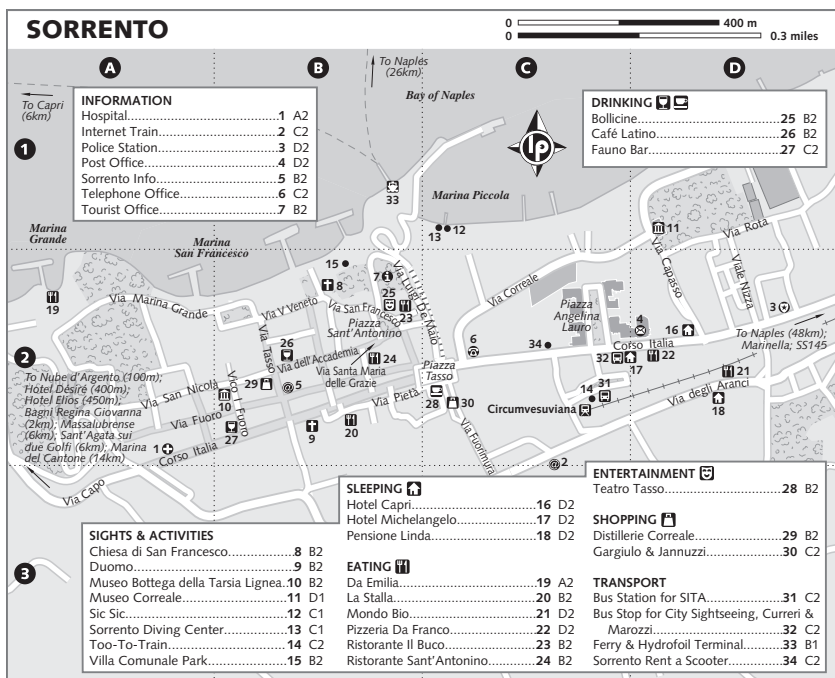
**Telephone office** (☎ 081 807 33 17; Piazza Tasso 37; 🕒 9am–1pm & 4–10pm)

**Tourist office** (☎ 081 807 40 33; Via Luigi De Maio 35; 🕒 8.30am–6.30pm Mon–Sat Mar–Oct, 8.30am–4pm Mon–Sat Nov–Feb) Has plenty of useful printed material and provides the free monthly information magazine *Surrentum*. Also has a hotel reservation service.

## Sights & Activities

Sparring off from Piazza Tasso, Corso Italia (closed to traffic from 10am to 1pm and 7pm to 7am) cuts through the *centro storico*, whose narrow streets throng with tourists on summer evenings. An attractive area, it's thick with loud souvenir stores, cafés, churches and restaurants.

On Corso Italia, the gleaming white façade of the **Duomo** (☎ 081 878 22 48; Corso Italia; 🕒 7.30am–noon & 5–8pm) gives no hint of its inner exuberance. Of particular note are the marble bishop's throne and the beautiful wooden choir stalls. Outside, the triple-tiered bell tower rests on an archway into which three classical columns have been set.



One of Sorrento's most beautiful spaces, the medieval cloisters of the **Chiesa di San Francesco** (☎ 081 878 12 69; Via San Francesco; 🕒 8am-1pm & 2-8pm) are well worth a look. A harmonious marriage of architectural styles – two sides are lined with 14th-century crossed arches, the other two with round arches supported by octagonal pillars – they are often used to host exhibitions and summer concerts. Next door, the **Villa Comunale park** (🕒 8am-8pm mid-Oct–mid-Apr, 8am-midnight mid-Apr–mid-Oct) commands grand views over the water to Mt Vesuvius.

You get similar views from the gardens of the **Museo Correale** (☎ 081 878 18 46; Via Corrales 50; admission €6; 🕒 9.30am-1.30pm Wed-Mon), Sorrento's main museum. Inside, there's a rich collection of 17th- and 19th-century Neapolitan art and an assortment of Greek and Roman artefacts.

Since the 18th century Sorrento has been famous for its *intarsio* (marquetry) furniture, some great examples of which you'll find at the palatial **Museo Bottega della Tarsia Lignea** (☎ 081 877 19 42; Via San Nicola 28; admission €8; 🕒 10am-1pm & 3-6pm Mon-Sat).

Sorrento does not have great beaches. In town the two main swimming spots are **Marina Piccola** and, to the east, **Marina Grande**, although neither is especially appealing. Nicer by far is **Bagni Regina Giovanna**, a rocky beach set among the ruins of the Roman Villa Pollio Felix. It is possible to walk there (follow Via Capo west for about 2km) but it's quicker to get the SITA bus for Massalubrense.

To find the best swimming spots, you'll really need a boat. **Sic Sic** (☎ 081 807 22 83; www.nauticasic.com; Marina Piccola; 🕒 May-Oct) rents out a variety of boats, starting at around €30 per hour or €90 a day (excluding petrol).

**Sorrento Diving Center** (☎ 081 877 48 12; www.sorrentodivingcenter.it; Via Marina Piccola 63) organises dives and a series of courses. Budget on around €90 for a half-day's course, €35 for a single dive.

## Tours

**City Sightseeing Sorrento** (☎ 081 877 47 07; www.sorrento.city-sightseeing.it; adult/6-15yr €15/7.50) runs a hop-on, hop-off bus tour of Sorrento and the surrounding area. Daily departures are at half past the hour, every hour between

9.30am and 4.30pm from Piazza Angelina Lauro. English-language commentaries are provided and tickets, available on board, are valid for six hours.

Operating out of a converted train carriage outside the Circumvesuviana train station, **Too-To-Train** (☎ 081 734 17 55; www.too-to-train.it) offers an extensive range of tours, including trips to Vesuvius (€20), Pompeii (€23) and the Amalfi Coast (€15).

## Festivals & Events

The city's patron saint, Sant'Antonino, is remembered on 14 February each year with processions and huge markets. The saint is credited with having saved Sorrento during WWII, when Salerno and Naples were heavily bombed.

Sorrento's **Settimana Santa** Easter processions are famous throughout Italy. There are two main processions: one at midnight on the Thursday preceding Good Friday, the second on Good Friday.

## Sleeping

Most accommodation is in the town centre or clustered along Via Capo, the coastal road west of the centre. Be sure to book early for the summer season.

**Nube d'Argento** (☎ 081 878 13 44; www.nubedargento.com; Via Capo 21; camp site per adult/child/tent €10/5/10, 2-person bungalows €50-85; ☎ Mar-Dec; 📺 📺) This inviting camp site is the nearest to town, 100m west along Via Capo. Pitches and wooden chalet-style bungalows are spread out beneath a canopy of olive trees, and the facilities, including an open-air swimming pool, are excellent.

**Pensione Linda** (☎ /fax 081 878 29 16; www.hotel.linda.it; Via degli Aranci 125; s €30-35, d €55-70) Don't be put off by the unappealing entrance – this is a pearl. A homely 2nd-floor *pensione* run by a hospitable family, it has spotless, modern rooms with good-sized bathrooms, powerful showers and inoffensive décor.

**Hotel Elios** (☎ 081 878 18 12; Via Capo 33; s €35-45, d €60-70; ☎ Easter-Nov) Owned by a charming old dear, this modest *pensione* offers no frills (unless you count the views), just impeccable old-fashioned hospitality and light, airy rooms. If your room doesn't have a balcony, and few do, enjoy the views from the downstairs terrace.

**Hotel Désiré** (☎ 081 878 15 63; www.desireehotelsorrento.com; Via Capo 31b; s €48-65, d €75-95; ☎ Mar-Dec; 📺) Désiré is a top budget choice. Rooms

are simple and sunny, there are fine views from the roof terrace and the atmosphere is laid-back and welcoming. The lift down to the rocky beach below is a further plus, even if you still have to pay for the umbrellas and deck chairs.

**Hotel Capri** (☎ 081 878 12 51; www.albergocapri.it; Corso Italia 212; s/d €120/180; ☎ Mar-Oct; 📺) The Capri is a decent three-star near the train station. It has comfortable, modern rooms decorated with lemon-and-blue majolica tiles and functional furniture. They're not the biggest rooms in the world but they come with soundproofing, something not to be sniffed at given the hotel's roadside location.

**Hotel Michelangelo** (☎ 081 878 12 51; www.michelangelohotel.it; Corso Italia 275; s/d €130/216; 📺 📺 📺) It's on the main road into town and near the train station, so this modern four-star hotel is well placed for everything. Inside, the marble and terracotta floors, inoffensive artwork and courteous service leave a pleasant impression.

## Eating

A local speciality to look out for is *gnocchi alla sorrentina* (gnocchi baked in tomato sauce with mozzarella).

**Mondo Bio** (☎ 081 807 56 94; Via degli Aranci 146; snacks/pasta €3/6.50; ☎ 10am-3pm Mon-Sat) Flying the banner for organic-vegetarian food, this bright shop-cum-restaurant serves a limited range of meat-free pastas and tofu dishes. The menu, chalked up outside, changes daily but might include *riso al forno* (baked rice) or *lenticchie e scarola* (lentils and prickly lettuce).

**Pizzeria Da Franco** (☎ 081 877 20 66; Corso Italia 265; pizzas €5-7) Though more deli than pizzeria, with hams hanging from the ceiling and bottles of olive oil squeezed onto the shelves, this hugely popular place does make the best pizza in town. Served on a metal tray with plastic cutlery, the house speciality comes with tomato, mozzarella, rocket and Parmesan. Expect queues most summer nights.

**Da Emilia** (☎ 081 807 27 20; Via Marina Grande 62; meals €22; ☎ closed Tue mid-Sep–Apr) Among the clutter of eateries along the Marina Grande seafront, you'll find Da Emilia, the archetypal family-run trattoria. It's welcoming and laid-back, and serves an uncomplicated menu of seafood classics – pasta with mussels and clams, fried squid and grilled fish. The food is delicious and the portions are huge.

**La Stalla** (☎ 081 807 41 45; Via Pietà 30; pizzas from €4.50, meals €25; 🗓 Thu-Tue) Go up the grand staircase to the large, open-air terrace covered by bamboo awnings and flanked by an orchard of lemon and orange trees. Here a small army of waiters works tirelessly, serving pastas and pizzas, meats and fish. The pastas are fine but it's the wood-fired pizzas that stand out.

**Ristorante Sant'Antonio** (☎ 081 877 12 00; Via Santa Maria delle Grazie 6; pizzas from €4.60, meals €26) The menu here is the longest in town, running the gamut from pizzas through pastas and risottos to meats, fish, salads and crepes. If you don't fancy scrolling through the whole thing, the steak is excellent and the profiteroles come in a luxurious chocolate sauce.

**Ristorante Il Buco** (☎ 081 878 23 54; Rampa Marina Piccola 5; meals €55; 🗓 Thu-Mon) Hardly the hole its name suggests, this Michelin-starred restaurant is housed in a former monks' wine cellar. The emphasis is on innovative regional cooking, so expect modern combos such as pasta with rock-fish sauce or *treccia* (local cheese) and prawns. Reservations recommended.

## Drinking

You can down pints in front of Sky sport; you can try local wines in wood-panelled wine bars and sip cocktails in swish cafés. You'll find no shortage of drinking dens in Sorrento.

**Bollicine** (☎ 081 878 46 16; Via dell'Accademia 9) An unpretentious wine bar with a dark wooden interior and boxes of bottles littered around the place. The wine list includes all the big Italian names and a selection of local labels – the amiable barman will happily advise you. There's also a small menu of *panini*, bruschetta and one or two pasta dishes.

**Café Latino** (☎ 081 878 37 18; Vico I Fuoro 4a) A romantic choice, this is the place to sit among orange and lemon trees and gaze into your lover's eyes over a chilled cocktail. If you can't drag yourselves away, you can also eat here (meals €30).

**Fauno Bar** (☎ 081 878 11 35; Piazza Tasso) This touristy café covers half the square and offers the best people-watching in town. It's not, however, the cheapest place to drink or eat. The cocktails start at about €8.50, sandwiches at €7.

## Entertainment

In the summer concerts are held in the cloisters of Chiesa di San Francesco; otherwise it's **Teatro Tasso** (☎ 081 807 55 25; www.teatro

tasso.com; Piazza Sant'Antonio) for a good old sing-along. The southern Italian equivalent of a cockney music hall, Teatro Tasso is home to the Sorrento Musical (€25), a sentimental revue of Neapolitan classics such as 'O Sole Mio' and 'Trona Sorrent'. The 75-minute performances start at 9.30pm every evening from Monday to Saturday between March and October.

## Shopping

The pedestrianised *centro storico* is the place to shop. Ignore the replica football shirts and souvenir tat and look out for inlaid wood and *limoncello*. You'll find plenty of the former at **Gargiulo & Jannuzzi** (☎ 081 878 10 41; Viale Enrico Caruso 1), a historic warehouse-cum-shop just off Piazza Tasso, and *limoncello* by the litre at **Distillerie Correale** (☎ 081 877 46 22; Via Tasso 20) in the historic centre.

## Getting There & Away

### BOAT

Sorrento is the main jumping-off point for the island of Capri, and ferries and hydrofoils run year-round; in summer every hour, in winter less frequently. In summer **LMP** (☎ 081 807 18 12; www.consorziolmp.it in Italian) runs up to 20 hydrofoils daily (€12.50, 20 minutes), while **Caremar** (☎ 081 807 30 77; www.caremar.it in Italian) has four daily fast ferries (€8.80, 25 minutes). **Allilauro** (☎ 081 878 14 30; www.allilauro.it) and **LMP** run up to 15 daily hydrofoils to Naples (€9.50, 35 minutes).

All ferries and hydrofoils depart from the port at Marina Piccola, where you buy your tickets.

### BUS

**Curreri** (☎ 081 801 54 20; www.curreriviaggi.it) runs six daily services to Sorrento from Naples' Capodichino airport, departing from outside the Arrivals hall and arriving in Piazza Angelina Lauro. Buy tickets (€7) for the 75-minute journey on the bus.

**SITA** (☎ 199 73 07 49; www.sita-on-line.it in Italian) buses serve Naples (€3.20, one hour 20 minutes), the Amalfi Coast and Sant'Agata sui due Golfi, leaving from outside the Circumvesuviana train station. Buy tickets at the station bar or from shops bearing the blue SITA sign. At least 12 buses a day run between Sorrento and Amalfi (€2.40, 1½ hours), looping around Positano (€1.30, 40 minutes). Change at Amalfi for Ravello.

**Marozzi** (☎ 080 579 01 11; www.marozzivit.it) operates two weekday buses to/from Rome's Stazione Tiburtina (€16.50).

### TRAIN

**Circumvesuviana** (☎ 081 772 24 44; www.vesuviana.it) trains run every half-hour between Sorrento and Naples (€3.20), via Pompeii and Ercolano (€1.80 to each).

### Getting Around

Local bus Line B runs from Piazza Tasso to the port at Marina Piccola (€1).

**Sorrento Rent a Scooter** (☎ 081 878 13 86; www.sorrento.it; Corso Italia 210a) is one of several rental companies hiring out scooters (about €45) and cars (from about €60 per day).

For a taxi, call ☎ 081 878 22 04.

### WEST OF SORRENTO

The countryside west of Sorrento is what you come to this part of the world for. Tortuous roads wind their way through hills covered in olive trees and lemon groves, passing through sleepy villages and tiny fishing ports. There are magnificent views at every turn, the best from Sant'Agata sui due Golfi and the high points overlooking Punta Campanella, the westernmost point of the Sorrentine Peninsula.

### Sant'Agata sui due Golfi

Perched high in the hills above Sorrento, sleepy Sant'Agata sui due Golfi commands spectacular views of the Bay of Naples on one side and the Bay of Salerno on the other (hence its name, Saint Agatha on the two Gulfs). The best viewpoint is the **Deserto** (☎ 081 878 01 99; Via Deserto; ☎ 8.30am-12.30pm & 2.30-4.30pm Oct-Mar, 8.30am-12.30pm & 4-9pm Apr-Sep), a Carmelite convent 1.5km uphill from the village centre.

A short drive, or a long walk, from the village you'll find **Agriturismo Le Tore** (☎ 081 808 06 37; www.letore.com; Via Pontone 43; s/d €80/90, dinner €19; ☎ Easter-end Oct; 📍), a working organic farm with eight barnlike rooms and an apartment that sleeps five (€700 to €1000 per week). The setting is lovely, a rustic farmhouse hidden among fruit trees, and the welcome is warm.

From Sorrento, there's a pretty 3km (approximately one hour) trail up to Sant'Agata. Otherwise, hourly SITA buses leave from the Circumvesuviana train station.

### Marina del Cantone

From Sorrento, follow the coastal road round to **Termini**. Stop a moment to admire the views before continuing on to **Nerano**, from where a beautiful hiking trail leads down to the stunning **Bay of Ieranto**, one of the coast's top swimming spots, and **Marina del Cantone**. This unassuming village with its small pebble beach is a lovely, tranquil place to stay and a popular diving destination.

**Nettuno Diving** (☎ 081 808 10 51; www.sorrentodiving.com; Via A Vespucci 39) leads various underwater activities, including snorkelling excursions, beginner courses and cave dives.

**Villaggio Residence Nettuno** (☎ 081 808 10 51; www.villaggonettuno.it; Via A Vespucci 39; camp sites per adult/child/tent €9/5/13, apt from €110; ☎ Mar-Nov) offers an array of accommodation (tent pitches, apartments for two to six people, mobile homes for two to four people) in the terraced olive groves by the village entrance.

The village has a reputation as a gastro-nomic hot spot and VIPs regularly boat over from Capri to dine here. There are a number of options, including the **Pensione La Certosa** (☎ 081 808 12 09; www.hotelercertosa.com; Marina del Cantone; meals about €30), a modest *pensione* which serves wonderful seafood in its seafront restaurant.

SITA buses run 10 times daily between Sorrento and Marina del Cantone (marked on timetables as Nerano Cantone; €1, one hour).

## AMALFI COAST

Stretching about 50km along the southern side of the Sorrentine Peninsula, the Amalfi Coast (Costiera Amalfitana) is one of Europe's most breathtaking. Cliffs terraced with scented lemon groves sheer down into sparkling seas; whitewashed villas cling precariously to unforgiving slopes while sea and sky merge in one vast blue horizon.

Yet its stunning topography has not always been a blessing. For centuries after the passing of Amalfi's glory days as a maritime superpower (from the 9th to the 12th centuries), the area was poor and its isolated villages regular victims of foreign incursions, earthquakes and landslides. But it was this very isolation that first drew visitors in the early 1900s, paving the way for the advent of tourism in the latter half of the century. Today the Amalfi Coast

is one of Italy's top tourist destinations, a favourite of well-to-do jet-setters and couples seeking romance.

The best time to visit is in spring or early autumn. In summer the coast's single road (SS163) gets very busy and prices are inflated; in winter much of the coast simply shuts down.

## Getting There & Away

### BOAT

Boat services to the Amalfi Coast towns are generally limited to the period between April and October. From Naples, **Metrol del Mare** (☎ 199 44 66 44; www.metrodelmare.com) runs summer-only services to Sorrento (€4.50), Positano (€9), Amalfi (€10) and Salerno (€10.50). **TraVelMar** (☎ 089 87 29 50) connects Salerno with Amalfi (€5) and Positano (€7).

### BUS

Bus services along the coast are year-round and efficient. **SITA** (☎ 199 73 07 49; www.sita-on-line.it in Italian) operates a service along the SS163 between Sorrento and Salerno (€2.90), with buses leaving about every hour. Buses also connect Rome and the Amalfi Coast, terminating in Salerno.

### CAR & MOTORCYCLE

If driving from the north, exit the A3 autostrada at Vietri sul Mare and follow the SS163 along the coast. From the south leave the A3 at Salerno and head for Vietri sul Mare and the SS163.

### TRAIN

From Naples you can take either the Circumvesuviana to Sorrento or a Trenitalia train to Salerno, then continue along the Amalfi Coast, eastwards or westwards, by SITA bus.

## POSITANO

pop 4000

The pearl in the pack, Positano is the coast's most photogenic and expensive town. Its steeply stacked houses are a medley of peaches, pinks and terracottas, and its near-vertical streets (many of which are, in fact, staircases) are lined with flamboyant shop displays, jewellery stalls, elegant hotels and smart restaurants. Look closely though and you'll find reassuring signs of everyday reality – crumbling stucco, streaked paintwork and even, on occasion, a faint whiff of drains.

An early visitor, John Steinbeck wrote in 1953: 'Positano bites deep. It is a dream place that isn't quite real when you are there and becomes beckoningly real after you have gone.' More than 50 years on his words still ring true.

## Orientation

Positano is split in two by a cliff bearing the Torre Trasita (tower). West of this is the smaller, less-crowded Spiaggia del Fornillo beach and the less expensive side of town; east is Spiaggia Grande, backing up to the town centre.

Navigating is easy, if steep. Via G Marconi, part of the main SS163 coastal road, forms a huge horseshoe around and above the town. From it, one-way Viale Pasitea makes a second, lower loop, ribboning off Via G Marconi from the west towards the town centre, then climbing back up as Via Cristoforo Colombo to rejoin Via G Marconi and the SS163. Branching off the bottom of Viale Pasitea, Via dei Mulini leads down to Spiaggia Grande.

## Information

**La Brezza** (☎ 089 87 58 11; Via del Brigantino 1; internet per 15 min €3; ☎ 9.30am-10pm Mar-Nov) Small ceramic shop with internet access.

**Police station** (☎ 089 87 50 11; cnr Via G Marconi & Viale Pasitea)

**Positano.com** (www.positano.com) A slick website with hotel and restaurant listings, itineraries and transport information.

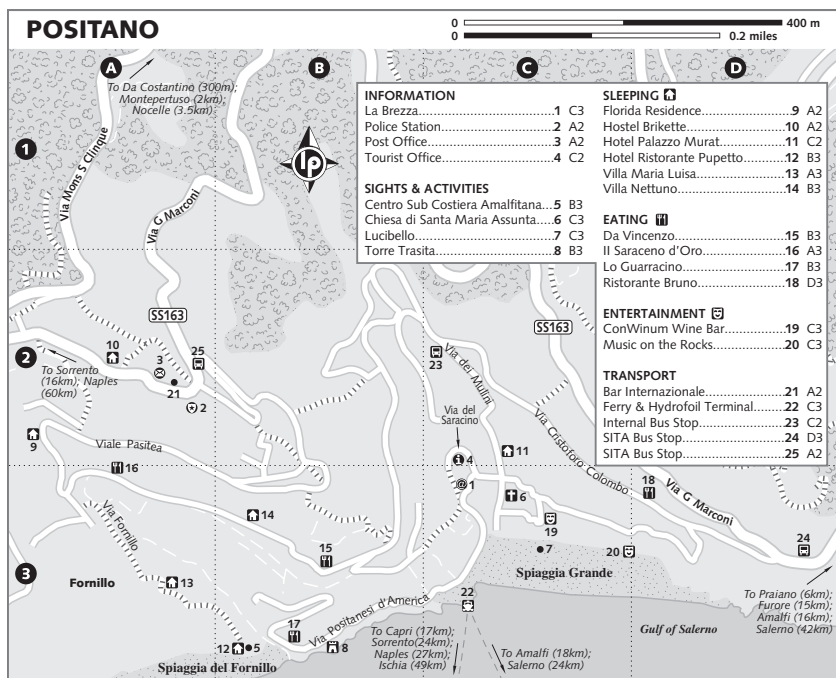
**Post office** (cnr Via G Marconi & Viale Pasitea)

**Tourist office** (☎ 089 87 50 67; www.aziendaturismo.org/ositano.it; Via del Saracino 4; ☎ 8am-1.30pm & 2-8pm Mon-Sat Apr-Oct, 8am-2pm Mon-Fri Nov-Mar)

## Sights & Activities

Rising above the rooftops, the ceramic-tiled dome of the **Chiesa di Santa Maria Assunta** (Piazza Flavio Gioia; ☎ 8am-noon & 3.30-7pm) is the town's most famous, and pretty much only, major sight. Inside the church, classical lines are broken by pillars topped with gilded Ionic capitals, while winged cherubs peek from above every arch. Above the main altar is a 13th-century Byzantine Black Madonna and Child.

It's a short hop to the nearby beach, **Spiaggia Grande**. Although it's no-one's dream beach, with greyish sand covered by legions of brightly coloured umbrellas, the water's clean and the setting is memorable. Hiring



a chair and umbrella in the fenced-off areas costs around €17 per person per day but the crowded public areas are free. Boating isn't cheap, either.

Operating out of a kiosk on Spiaggia Grande, **Lucibello** (☎ 089 875 50 32; www.lucibello.it; Spiaggia Grande; ☎ 9am-8pm Easter-Nov) hires out small motorboats for about €30 per hour. It also organises boat excursions to Capri and the Grotta dello Smeraldo (p666). Over on Spiaggia del Fornillo the **Centro Sub Costiera Amalfitana** (☎ 089 81 21 48; www.centrosuib.it) runs dives (around €60 for two hours) and lessons for adults and children.

## Sleeping

Most hotels are three-star and above and prices are universally high. Cheaper accommodation is more limited and must usually be booked well in advance for summer. Ask at the tourist office about rooms or apartments in private houses.

**Hostel Brikette** (☎ 089 87 58 57; www.brikette.com; Via G Marconi 358; dm €22-26, d €65-85, apt €115-180; ☎ late Mar-Nov; 📺) Not far from the Bar Internazionale bus stop on the coastal road is this bright

and cheerful hostel offering the cheapest accommodation in town. There are various options: six- to eight-person dorms (single sex and mixed), double rooms and apartments for two to five people. There are also laundry, free wi-fi and left luggage facilities.

**Villa Maria Luisa** (☎ 089 87 50 23; www.pensione marialuisa.com; Via Fornillo 42; r €65-70, with view €70-80) The Maria Luisa is a lovely little hotel and perennial favourite. There's nothing flashy about the place but the quirky, old-fashioned rooms, the sunny communal area and the jovial owner will make this a fun stay. If possible, go for a room with a view – they're truly magnificent.

**Villa Nettuno** (☎ 089 87 54 01; www.villanettunopositano.it; Viale Pasitea 208; s/d €75/90) Villa Nettuno is a charming spot, hidden behind a barrage of foliage. Rooms in the 300-year-old part of the building boast heavy rustic décor, frescoed wardrobes and a communal terrace; those in the renovated part are still good value but less interesting, with lime-green bathrooms and cheap furniture.

**Florida Residence** (☎ 089 87 58 01; www.floridaresidence.net; Viale Pasitea 171; d €90-110, apt from €120;

☞ Apr-Oct; ☞ ☞ ☞ This friendly place packs a lot of perks for the price – free parking, air-con (in most but not all the rooms) and even a tiny freestanding pool. The clean, basic rooms are fairly forgettable but the terrace views are not and the apartments are a superb deal.

**Hotel Ristorante Pupetto** (☞ 089 87 50 87; www.hotelpupetto.it; Via Fornillo 37; s €90-100, d €130-170;

☞ Apr–mid-Nov) Overlooking Spiaggia del Fornillo, this is as close to the beach as you can get without sleeping on a sun-lounge. A bustling, cheerful place, the hotel forms part of a large, rambling beach complex with a popular terraced restaurant (meals €30), a nautical-theme bar and simple, sunny guest rooms.

**Hotel Palazzo Murat** (☞ 089 87 51 77; www.palazzomurat.it; Via dei Mulini 23; s €120-210, d €150-375; ☞)

This upmarket treat is housed in the *palazzo* that Gioacchino Murat, Napoleon's brother-in-law and one-time king of Naples, used as his summer residence. Beyond the lush gardens, rooms are traditional with antiques, original oil paintings and plenty of glossy marble. Wi-fi is available in the central courtyard.

## Eating

Most restaurants, bars and trattorias, many of which are unashamedly touristy, close over winter, making a brief reappearance for Christmas and New Year.

**Da Costantino** (☞ 089 87 57 38; Via Montepertuso; pizzas from €4, meals €20; ☞ closed Wed) It might not seem so, but it's worth the slog up to this bustling trattoria about 300m north of Hostel Brikette. One of the few authentic places in town, it serves honest, down-to-earth Italian grub, including delicious *scialatielli* (ribboned pasta) served with aubergines, tomato and mozzarella. There are also excellent pizzas, fail-safe meats and some amazing views.

**Il Saraceno d'Oro** (☞ 089 81 20 50; Viale Pasitea 254; pizzas about €6, meals €25; ☞ Mar-Oct) A busy, bustling place, the Saraceno's blend of cheery service, uncomplicated food and reasonable prices continues to attract the punters. The pizzas are good, the pasta's tasty and the desserts are sticky and sweet. The complimentary end-of-meal glass of *limoncello* is a nice extra touch.

**Ristorante Bruno** (☞ 089 87 53 92; Via Cristoforo Colombo 157; meals €28; ☞ Feb-Oct) It doesn't look much with its nonexistent décor and unimpressive venue, but this unassuming restaurant serves superb seafood. As a *primo* the home-made *scialatiella con frutti di mare* (pasta ribboned with mussels, prawns, clams, scampi and

sweet cherry tomatoes) takes some beating; for a main course try the grilled fish with a wedge of local lemon.

**Da Vincenzo** (☞ 089 87 51 28; Viale Pasitea 172-178; meals €35; ☞ Mar-Oct) If you don't usually eat dessert this is the place to push out the boat and go for it. There are all the usual suspects – *babà*, tiramisu and *crème brûlée* – plus originals such as strawberry and pistachio mousse. For the rest, seafood features heavily, service is friendly and the atmosphere is elegant. Dinner reservations are preferred.

**Lo Guarracino** (☞ 089 87 57 94; Via Positanesi d'America; pizzas from €8.50, meals €35; ☞ Mar-Dec) On the scenic path connecting Positano's two beaches, this picturesque restaurant serves fine views and expensive food. The menu is seafood heavy with dishes like grilled swordfish and *risotto alla pescatore* (fisherman's risotto). If those don't appeal there are also pizzas and steaks. Book ahead.

## Entertainment

More piano bar than warehouse, Positano's nightlife is genteel, sophisticated and safe.

**ConWinum Wine Bar** (☞ 089 81 16 87; Via Rampa Teglia 12; ☞ Mar-Dec) Part wine bar, part art gallery, ConWinum is a snazzy, softly lit place with tangerine walls and swinging lounge music. Designer-clad Italians drop in for live jazz on Friday and Saturday nights (summer only) and a daily wine tasting.

**Music on the Rocks** (☞ 089 87 58 74; www.musicontherocks.it; Via Grotte dell'Incanto 51; admission €10-25; ☞ Easter-Oct) Positano's only genuine disco is carved into the tower at the eastern end of Spiaggia Grande. One of the top nightspots on the coast, it attracts a good-looking crowd and some of the region's best DJs. Sounds are mainstream house and disco.

## Getting There & Around

SITA runs frequent buses to/from Amalfi (€1.30) and Sorrento (€1.30). Buses drop you off at one of two main bus stops: coming from Sorrento and the west, opposite Bar Internazionale; arriving from Amalfi and the east, at the top of Via Cristoforo Colombo. When departing, buy bus tickets at Bar Internazionale or, if headed eastwards, from the tobacconist at the bottom of Via Cristoforo Colombo.

Between Easter and October, daily ferries link Positano with Amalfi (€6), Sorrento (€6), Salerno (€7), Naples (€9) and Capri (€15.50).



Getting round Positano is largely a matter of walking. If your knees can handle them, there are dozens of narrow alleys and stairways that make walking relatively easy and joyously traffic-free. Otherwise, an orange bus follows the lower ring road every half-hour, passing along Viale Pasitea, Via Cristoforo Colombo and Via G Marconi. Stops are clearly marked and you buy your ticket (€1) on board. It passes by both SITA bus stops.

## AROUND POSITANO

### Nocelle

A tiny, still-isolated mountain village, Nocelle (450m) affords some of the most spectacular views on the entire coast. A world apart from touristy Positano, it's a sleepy, silent place where not much ever happens and none of the few residents would ever want it to.

The easiest way to get here is by local bus from Positano (€1, 30 minutes, 17 daily). Hikers tackling the Sentieri degli Dei (see p666) might want to lunch at the **Trattoria Santa Croce** (☎ 089 81 12 60; meals €25) as they pass through.

### Praiano & Furore

An ancient fishing village, **Praiano** boasts one of the coast's most popular beaches, Marina di Praia. From the SS163 (next to the Hotel Continentale), take the steep path that leads down the side of the cliffs to a tiny inlet with a small stretch of coarse sand and deep blue water.

On the coastal road east of Praiano, **Hotel Continentale & La Tranquillita** (☎ 089 87 40 84; www.continentale.praiano.it; Via Roma 21; camp site per tent €30, s €40-60, d €60-90, apt per week €500-1250; ☎ r Apr-Oct, apt year-round) offers the full gamut of accommodation: cool, white rooms with sea views, apartments sleeping up to six people, and 15 tent sites on a series of grassy terraces. From the lowest of these a private staircase leads down to a rocky platform on the sea. Transport is no problem either as there's a bus stop just outside the hotel.

A few kilometres further on, Marina di Furore sits at the bottom of what's known as the fjord of Furore, a giant cleft that cuts through the Lattari mountains. Some 300m above, near the one-horse village of **Furore, Agriturismo Serafina** (☎ 089 83 03 47; www.agriturismo-serafina.it; Via Picola 3, Località Vigne; r incl breakfast €35-40, half-board per person €50-55; ☎) is a real beaut. A working farm, it has seven spruce rooms, each with its own small terrace and views over the lush

green terraces below. Delicious home-cooked meals are served on the central terrace or, in winter, in the light-filled dining room.

## AMALFI

### pop 5500

A hugely popular day-trip destination, Amalfi is an appealing ensemble of gaudy ceramic shops, hidden alleyways and beachside restaurants. There is, however, little to suggest that it was once the capital of a powerful maritime republic with a population of more than 70,000. It's not a big place and there are few historical buildings of note. The explanation for this is chilling – most of the old city, and its populace, simply slid into the sea during an earthquake in 1343.

But more than its sights, Amalfi is all about its beautiful seaside setting, the perfect spot for aimless wandering and long, lingering lunches.

Just round the headland, neighbouring Atrani is a picturesque tangle of whitewashed alleys and arches centred on a lively, lived-in piazza and popular beach.

### Orientation

Buses and boats drop you off at Amalfi's main transport hub, Piazza Flavio Gioia. Cross the road and duck through to Piazza del Duomo, the town's focal square. Most of the hotels and restaurants are in the tangled lanes either side of the main strip, Via Lorenzo d'Amalfi, and its continuation, Via Capuano, which snake north from the cathedral. On the seafront Corso delle Repubbliche Marinare follows the coast eastwards, becoming Via Pantaleone Comite as it leads to the Saracen tower and Atrani.

### Information

**Amalfi Servizi Express** (☎ 089 87 34 47; Piazza dei Dogi 8; internet per 30 min €3; ☎ 9am-1pm & 4.30-8pm Mon-Sat, closed Thu pm)

**Post office** (☎ 089 87 29 96; Corso delle Repubbliche Marinare) Next door to the tourist office.

**Tourist office** (☎ 089 87 11 07; www.amalfitouristoffice.it; Piazza Flavio Gioia 3; ☎ 8.30am-1.30pm & 3-5.15pm Mon-Fri, to 7.15pm Jul & Aug, 8.30am-noon Sat) Has bus and boat timetables and a few maps but precious little else.

### Sights & Activities

Dominating Piazza del Duomo, the iconic **Cattedrale di Sant'Andrea** (☎ 089 87 10 59; Piazza del Duomo; ☎ 9am-7pm) makes an imposing sight

at the top of its sweeping flight of stairs. The cathedral dates in part from the early 10th century, although its distinctive striped facade has been rebuilt twice, most recently at the end of the 19th century. Something of a hybrid, it mixes various architectural styles: the two-toned masonry is largely Sicilian Arabic-Norman while the less impressive interior is pure baroque. In summer, entrance between 10am and 5pm is through the adjacent *Chiostro del Paradiso*.

To the left of the cathedral's porch, the pint-sized **Chiostro del Paradiso** (☎ 089 87 13 24; admission €2.50; 🕒 9am-7pm) was built in 1266 to house the tombs of Amalfi's prominent citizens.

In the town hall, the one-room **Museo Civico** (☎ 089 87 10 66; Piazza Municipio; admission free; 🕒 8.30am-1pm Mon-Fri) contains the *Tavole Amalfitane*, an ancient manuscript draft of Amalfi's maritime code, and other historical documents.

Amalfi's other museum of note is the fascinating **Museo della Carta** (Paper Museum; ☎ 089 830 45 61; www.museodellacarta.it; Via delle Cartiere; admission €3.70; 🕒 10am-6.30pm daily Mar-Oct, 10am-3.30pm Tue-Sun Nov-Feb). Housed in a 13th-century paper mill (the oldest in Europe), it lovingly preserves the original paper presses, which are still in full working order, as you'll see during the 15-minute guided tour (in English).

Harking back to Amalfi's days as a great maritime republic, the cavernous **Arsenale** (Via Matteo Camera) was once the town's main shipbuilding depot. Today it's used to host temporary exhibitions – opening hours vary according to what's on.

For all its seafaring history, Amalfi's main beach is not a particularly appealing place to swim. If you're really intent on a dip, think about hiring a boat. You'll find a number of operators along Lungomare dei Cavalieri, charging about €50 for a couple of hours.

Four kilometres west of Amalfi, Conca dei Marini is home to the **Grotta dello Smeraldo** (admission €5; 🕒 9am-4pm), a haunting cave named after the eerie emerald colour that emanates from the sea water. SITA buses regularly pass by and **Coop Sant'Andrea** (☎ 089 87 31 90; www.coop.santandrea.it; Lungomare dei Cavalieri 1) runs two daily boats from Amalfi (€10 return) at 9am and 3.30pm. Allow 1½ hours for the round trip.

## Festivals & Events

Every 24 December and 6 January, skin-divers from all over Italy make a pilgrimage to the ceramic *presepe* submerged in the Grotta dello Smeraldo.

The **Regatta of the Four Ancient Maritime Republics**, which rotates between Amalfi, Venice, Pisa and Genoa, is held on the first Sunday in June. Amalfi's turn comes round again in 2009.

## WALK THE COAST

Rising steeply from the coast, the densely wooded Lattari mountains provide some stunning walking opportunities. An extraordinary network of paths traverses the craggy precipitous peaks, climbing to remote farmhouses through wild and beautiful valleys. It's tough going, though – long ascents up seemingly endless flights of steps are almost unavoidable.

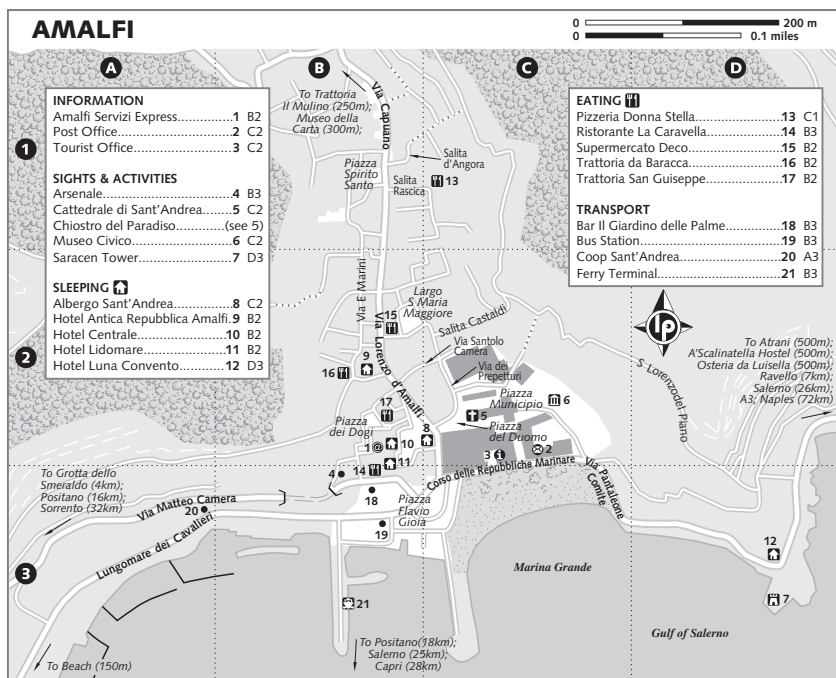
Probably the best-known walk, the 12km Sentiero degli Dei (Path of the Gods; 5½ to six hours) follows the steep, often rocky paths linking Positano to Praiano. It's a spectacular walk passing through some of the area's least developed countryside and offering breathtaking views. The route is marked by red-and-white stripes daubed on rocks and trees, although some of these have become worn in places and might be difficult to make out.

The more demanding 14km Capo Muro (6½ to seven hours) follows a similar route, passing beneath soaring limestone cliffs as it climbs to a height of 1039m. You can walk it either way but you'll get the best views by starting in Praiano and finishing in Positano.

To the west, the tip of the Sorrentine Peninsula is another hiking hot spot. Some 110km of paths crisscross the area, linking the spectacular coastline with the rural hinterland. These range from tough all-day treks, such as the 14.1km Alta Via dei Monti Lattari from the Fontanelle hills near Positano down to the Punta Campanella, to shorter walks suitable for all the family.

Tourist offices can supply basic walking maps, but if you're intent on trying one of the more demanding routes, you'll need a detailed map. One of the best is the CAI's (Club Alpino Italiano) *Monti Lattari, Penisola Sorrentina, Costiera Amalfitana: Carta dei Sentieri* (€8) at 1:30,000 scale.

If walking in summer, make sure you have a hat, sunscreen and plenty of water.



## Sleeping

**A'Scalinatella Hostel** (☎ 089 87 14 92; [www.hostelscalinatella.com](http://www.hostelscalinatella.com); Piazza Umberto I, Atrani; dm €21-25, d €73-83, without bathroom €50-60; 📺) This barebones operation, just round the headland in Atrani, has dorms, rooms and apartments scattered across the village. Extras include internet, laundry and a kitchen. Doors are locked at 2am.

**Albergo Sant'Andrea** (☎ 089 87 11 45; Via Santolo Camera; s/d €54/80; 📺 Mar-Oct; 📺) Enjoy busy Piazza del Duomo from the comfort of your own room. This modest two-star has basic rooms that, while unspectacular, provide little cause for complaint – they're clean, there's hot water and the rates are reasonable. What is a nuisance, though, is the noise from the piazza outside.

**Hotel Centrale** (☎ 089 87 26 08; [www.hotelcentraleamalfi.it](http://www.hotelcentraleamalfi.it); Largo Duchi Piccolomini 1; s €70-100, d €85-135; 📺) This is one of the best-value hotels in Amalfi. Cool, fresh rooms, many of which overlook Piazza del Duomo, feature vibrant blue-and-yellow tiles, white walls and pristine bathrooms; some even have their own balconies. Upstairs, the top-floor terrace offers grand views.

**Hotel Lidomare** (☎ 089 87 13 32; [www.lidomare.it](http://www.lidomare.it); Largo Duchi Piccolomini 9; s €55-65, d €100-130; 📺) The spacious rooms at this friendly, family-run hotel have a real air of gentility with their charmingly haphazard décor, majolica tiles and fine old antiques. Some also have Jacuzzi bathtubs and sea views. Look out for the king-sized *presepe* in the hallway.

**Hotel Antica Repubblica Amalfi** (☎ 089 873 63 10; [www.anticarepubblica.it](http://www.anticarepubblica.it); Vico dei Pastai 2; r €90-160; 📺) This smart hotel is snugly housed in a white-washed 11th-century *palazzo*. Inside it's all warm terracotta floors and earthenware vases, floral ceramic tiling and wrought-iron lamps. Upstairs, rooms are tastefully decorated, if not the biggest in town. Breakfast is served on the panoramic rooftop terrace.

**Hotel Luna Convento** (☎ 089 87 10 02; [www.lunahotel.it](http://www.lunahotel.it); Via Pantaleone Comite 33; s €160-210, d €180-230; 📺 📺) With one of the most captivating hotel courtyards in Italy, this historic hotel is stunning. Its 13th-century cloister, once centrepiece of St Francis' 1226 convent, is now a delightful open-air bar. Many rooms are in the former monks' cells, although they're far from monastic with bright tiles, balconies and sea views.

## Eating

**Supermercato Deco** (Salita dei Curiali; ☎ 8am-1.30pm daily, 4.30-8pm Mon-Wed, Fri & Sat) Picnickers and self-caterers can stock up here.

**Pizzeria Donna Stella** (☎ 338 358 84 83; Salita Rascia 2; pizzas from €5, mains €8; ☎ Mon-Sat) A laid-back pizzeria hidden in the quiet back alleys, this tiny place is a world apart from the bigger, slicker joints on Amalfi's main thoroughfares. Alongside the very good pizzas, dishes of the day are chalked up on a blackboard. Typically, these might include sausage and broccoli, grilled steak or salad.

**Trattoria Il Mulino** (☎ 089 87 22 23; Via delle Cartiere 36; pizzas €6, meals €20) A TV-in-the-corner, kids-running-between-the-tables sort of place, this is about as authentic a trattoria as you'll find in Amalfi. The menu features the usual pizzas, pasta and seafood but the food is tasty and the prices are honest. The *scialatiella alla pescatore* (pasta ribbons with prawns, mussels, tomato and parsley) comes much recommended.

**Trattoria San Giuseppe** (☎ 089 87 26 40; Salita Ruggero II 4; pizzas from €5, meals €25; ☎ Fri-Wed) Whether for huge helpings of pasta or wood-fired pizza, this back-alley trattoria is an atmospheric spot. The occasional whiff of antique drains might be a bit too atmospheric for those dining outside, but you can always try the fan-cooled interior.

**Trattoria da Baracca** (☎ 089 87 12 85; Piazza dei Dogi; meals €30; ☎ Thu-Tue) Touristy and over the top with its stripy blue awnings and maritime paraphernalia, this cheery trattoria serves excellent seafood. The *scialatiella con vongole e zucchini* (pasta ribbons with clams and courgettes) is delicious and the fish soup (€24) something of a local celebrity. If you don't like fish, play safe with lasagne and *gnocchi alla sorrentina*.

**Osteria da Luisella** (☎ 089 87 10 87; Piazza Umberto I, Atrani; meals €30; ☎ Thu-Tue) Great food, great people-watching and an atmospheric setting make this an attractive option. Grab a table under the arches and sit back to some fresh-off-the-boat seafood. The menu varies but if it's on, the fish ravioli is wonderful and the *cassuola* (stewed octopus) very filling. Vegetarians might enjoy the *caporalessa*, a baked concoction of aubergines, tomatoes and cheese.

**Ristorante La Caravella** (☎ 089 87 10 29; Via Matteo Camera 12; meals €60, tasting menu €75; ☎ Wed-Mon Jan-mid-Nov) One of the top restaurants on the

coast, the Michelin-starred Caravella dishes up local food with a nouvelle zap. That translates to dishes such as monkfish with pumpkin and beans or grilled scampi with creamed mint sauce. Wine aficionados are likely to find something of interest on the 15,000-label list.

## Getting There & Away

SITA buses run from Piazza Flavio Gioia to Sorrento (€2.40, 1½ hours, more than 12 daily) via Positano (€1.30, 40 minutes), and also to Ravello (€1, 25 minutes, every 40 minutes), Salerno (€1.80, 1¼ hours, at least hourly) and Naples (€3.20, two to three hours depending on the route, seven daily). Buy tickets and check schedules at **Bar Il Giardino delle Palme** (Piazza Flavio Gioia), opposite the bus stop.

Between April and October there are daily ferry sailings to Salerno (€5), Naples (€10), Positano (€6) and Capri (€16).

## RAVELLO

### pop 2500

Sitting high in the hills above Amalfi, Ravello is a refined, polished town almost entirely dedicated to tourism. Boasting impeccable bohemian credentials – Wagner, DH Lawrence and Virginia Woolf all spent time here – it's today known for its ravishing gardens and stupendous views, the best in the world according to former resident Gore Vidal.

Most people visit on a day trip from Amalfi – a nerve-tingling 7km drive up the Valle del Dragone – although to best enjoy Ravello's romantic otherworldly atmosphere you'll need to stay overnight.

The **tourist office** (☎ 089 85 70 96; www.ravellotime.it; Via Roma 18bis; ☎ 9am-8pm Apr-Oct, 9am-5pm Nov-Mar) provides a colour pamphlet, *Ravello The City of Music*, with a map, historical background and suggested walking itineraries.

## Sights & Activities

Forming the eastern flank of Piazza del Duomo, the **cathedral** (☎ 9am-1pm & 4.30-7pm) was originally built in 1086 but has since undergone various face-lifts. Of particular interest is the striking pulpit, supported by six twisting columns set on marble lions and decorated with flamboyant mosaics of peacocks, birds and dancing lions. Note also how the floor is tilted towards the square – a deliberate measure to enhance the perspective effect. To the right of the central nave, stairs lead down to

## TOURISM STRAINS THE COAST

A relatively recent phenomenon, tourism has transformed the Amalfi Coast and Naples' offshore islands. What were once poor, remote places dependent on fishing and agriculture are now glamorous holiday destinations awash with day-trippers and cashed-up tourists.

Among the first outsiders to discover the area were Russians escaping the revolution in the early 20th century. However, it wasn't until the second half of the century that the floodgates started to open. In 1953 John Steinbeck put Positano on the map with a famous article in *Harper's Bazaar* and soon intellectuals, artists and bohemians began to pour in.

Today, tourism is the area's biggest money-spinner. Hundreds of thousands of people visit each year, 70% of them between June and September, placing an enormous strain on the area's natural resources and limited infrastructure.

Environmental observers are divided on the effects that this is having. In a 2006 survey on environmental stewardship, the *National Geographic* commended the Amalfi Coast for its successful conservation efforts, awarding it a rating of 72 out of 100. This was an 11-point improvement on a 2003 rating of 61, issued alongside warnings that the area had reached its carrying capacity.

Striking a more sombre note was a report published by a British think-tank in September 2006. According to the Centre for Future Studies, the Amalfi Coast is one of 10 world tourist sites that could be forced to cap visitor numbers by 2020, or even close, due to the effects of climate change and out-of-control tourism.

Whatever the verdict, tourism is on the coast to stay. The four-year period between 2001 and 2005 witnessed a regionwide dip in numbers, but recent figures show that the downturn is over and visitors are once again returning to Amalfi and its extraordinary coastline.

the cathedral **museum** (admission €2) and its small collection of religious artefacts.

To the south of the cathedral, **Villa Rufolo** is famous for its fabulous 19th-century **gardens** (☎ 089 85 76 57; admission €5; ☎ 9am-8pm Apr-Oct, 9am-6pm Nov-Mar). Commanding superb views, they are packed with exotic colours, artistically crumbling towers and luxurious blooms. On seeing them in 1880, Wagner wrote that he had found the garden of Klingsor (setting for the second act of his opera *Parsifal*). Today the gardens are used to stage concerts during the town's celebrated festival.

Some way east of Piazza del Duomo, the 20th-century **Villa Cimbrone** (☎ 089 85 80 72; admission €5; ☎ 9am-½hr before sunset) is worth seeking out for the vast views from the delightfully ramshackle gardens. The best viewpoint is the Belvedere of Infinity, an awe-inspiring terrace lined with fake classical busts.

## Festivals & Events

Between June and mid-September the **Ravello Festival** (☎ 089 85 83 60; www.ravellofestival.com) turns much of the town centre into a stage. Events ranging from orchestral concerts and chamber music to ballet performances, film screenings and exhibitions are held in various locations, including the gardens at Villa Rufolo.

There's also a programme of classical music, **Chamber Music on the Amalfi Coast**, which begins in March and continues until late October. Concerts are staged at Villa Rufolo, except between July and September, when they move to the Convento di Santa Rosa in Conca dei Marini. Tickets cost from €20. For further information and reservations, contact the **Ravello Concert Society** (☎ 089 85 81 49; www.ravello.info).

## Sleeping

**Agriturismo Monte Brusara** (☎ 089 85 74 67; www.montebrusara.com; Via Monte Brusara 32; per person €35-40) It's a tough half-hour walk from Ravello's centre, but this authentic mountainside *agriturismo* (farm-stay accommodation) is the real McCoy. It's an ideal spot to escape the crowds, and offers three comfortable but basic rooms, fabulous food and some big views. Campers can also pitch tents here (for €12 per person).

**Hotel Villa Amore** (☎ /fax 089 85 71 35; Via dei Fusco 5; s €56-60, d €75-95) This welcoming *pensione* is the best budget choice in town. Tucked away down a quiet lane, it has modest, homely rooms furnished with whatever the owner had to hand at the time, and clean bathrooms. The garden restaurant (about €20 for a meal) is a further plus.

**Hotel Toro** (☎ /fax 089 85 72 11; www.hoteltoro.it; Via Roma 16; s/d €79/110; 🍷 Easter-Nov; 🍷) It's been a hotel since the late 19th century and the Toro is just off Piazza del Duomo, within easy range of the clanging cathedral bells. The not-huge rooms are decked out in traditional style with terracotta or light-marble tiles and soothing cream furnishings. Outside, the walled garden is a delightful place for a sundowner.

## Eating

**Take Away Da Nino** (☎ 089 858 62 49; Viale Parco della Rimembranza 41) Fast food Ravello-style – come here for takeaway pizza and crunchy fried nibbles.

**Ristorante Figli di Papà** (☎ 089 85 83 02; Via della Marra 7; meals €30, lunchtime menu €17; 🍷 Wed-Mon Apr-Sep) Sit down to innovative regional cuisine under the vaulted ceiling of this tastefully restored 12th-century tower. There's seafood and meat as well as some lovely, creative desserts such as tiramisù with cream of pistachio. Upstairs, there are five airy B&B rooms (€50 to €90 – see www.palazzodellamarra.com).

**Cumpà Cosimo** (☎ 089 85 71 56; Via Roma 44-6; meals €30) If you're looking for honest down-to-earth Italian grub, you can't do much better than this popular trattoria. An informal family affair – meat comes from the family butcher, the fruit and veg are homegrown, and the house wine is homebrew – it serves excellent handmade pasta, tasty gnocchi and some fine main courses.

## Getting There & Away

SITA operates buses every 40 minutes from Piazza Flavio Gioia in Amalfi (€1, 25 minutes). By car, turn north about 2km east of Amalfi. Vehicles are not permitted in Ravello's town centre but there's plenty of space in supervised car parks on the perimeter.

## FROM AMALFI TO SALERNO

The 26km drive to Salerno, though less exciting than the 16km stretch westwards to Positano, is exhilarating and dotted with a series of small towns, each with their own character and each worth a brief look.

Three and a half kilometres east of Amalfi, or a steep kilometre-long walk down from Ravello, **Minori** is a small, workaday town, popular with holidaying Italians. Further along, **Maiori** is the coast's biggest resort, a brassy place full of large seafront hotels, restaurants and beach clubs.

Just beyond **Erbie** and its beautiful beach, **Cetara** is a picturesque tumbledown fishing village with a reputation as a gastronomic hot spot. Tuna and anchovies are the local specialities, appearing in various guises at **Al Convento** (☎ 089 26 10 39; Piazza San Francesco 16; meals €24), a lovely seafood restaurant near the small harbour. For your money, you'll probably not eat better anywhere else on the coast.

Shortly before Salerno, the road passes through **Vietri sul Mare**, the ceramic capital of Campania. Its not-unattractive historic centre is packed to the gills with ceramic shops, the most famous of which is **Ceramica Artistica Solimene** (☎ 089 21 02 43; www.solimene.com; Via Madonna degli Angeli 7; 🍷 8am-7pm Mon-Fri, 8am-1.30pm & 4-7pm Sat), a vast factory outlet with an extraordinary glass and ceramic façade.

## SALERNO

pop 134,900

Salerno provides something of a reality check after the glut of postcard-pretty towns along the Amalfi Coast. As a major port and transport hub it's unlikely to detain you long, but if you do find yourself passing through en route to Paestum, don't despair. The *centro storico* is a vibrant area of medieval churches, neighbourhood trattorias and neon-lit wine bars, and the seafront is a fine place for an evening stroll.

Originally an Etruscan and later a Roman colony, Salerno flourished with the arrival of the Normans in the 11th century. Robert Guiscard made it the capital of his dukedom in 1076 and, under his patronage, the Scuola Medica Salernitana was renowned as one of medieval Europe's greatest medical institutes. More recently, it was left in tatters by the heavy fighting that followed the 1943 landings of the American 5th Army, just to the south of the city.

## Orientation

Salerno's train station is on Piazza Vittorio Veneto, at the eastern end of town. The main strip, the car-free Corso Vittorio Emanuele II, leads off northwest to the *centro storico*. Running parallel is Corso Garibaldi, which becomes Via Roma as it heads out of the city towards the Amalfi Coast.

## Information

**Ospedale Ruggi D'Aragona** (☎ 089 67 11 11; Via San Leonardo) Hospital.

**Post office** (☎ 089 257 21 11; Corso Garibaldi 203)

**Tourist office** (☎ 089 23 14 32; Piazza Vittorio Veneto 1; ☎ 9am-2pm & 3-8pm Mon-Sat, plus 9am-12.30pm & 5-7.30pm Sun Jul & Aug)

## Sights

The highlight of the *centro storico* is the impressive **cathedral** (☎ 089 23 13 87; Piazza Alfano; ☎ 10am-6pm). Built by the Normans under Robert Guiscard in the 11th century and remodelled in the 18th century, it sustained severe damage in the 1980 earthquake. It's dedicated to San Matteo (St Matthew), whose remains were reputedly brought to the city in 954 and now lie beneath the main altar in the vaulted crypt. In the right-hand apse, the **Capella delle Crociate** (Chapel of the Crusades) was so named because crusader's weapons were blessed here. Under the altar stands the tomb of the 11th-century pope Gregory VII.

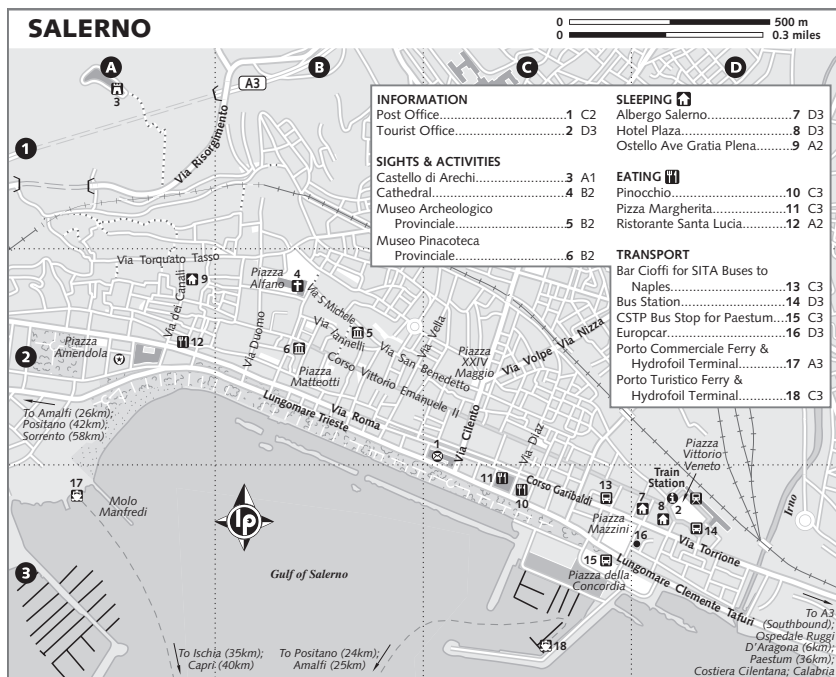
To the south of the cathedral, the **Museo Archeologico Provinciale** (☎ 089 23 11 35; Via San Benedetto 28; admission free; ☎ 9am-1.30pm & 2-3.15pm Tue-Sat, 9am-1pm Sun) contains archaeological finds from around the region, including a 1st-century-BC bronze head of Apollo.

In the heart of the medieval quarter, the small **Museo Pinacoteca Provinciale** (☎ 089 258 30 73; Via Mercanti 63; admission free; ☎ 9am-1pm & 4-7pm Tue-Sat, 9am-1.30pm Sun) houses a small art collection dating from the Renaissance right up to the first half of the 19th century.

Overlooking Salerno, the forbidding **Castello di Arechi** (☎ 089 23 39 00; Via Benedetto Croce; admission free; ☎ 9.30am-1.30pm & 3.30-7.30pm Tue-Sun) is spectacularly positioned 263m above the city. Originally a Byzantine fort, it was built by the Lombard duke of Benevento, Arechi II, in the 8th century and subsequently modified by the Normans and Aragonese. Today it houses a permanent collection of ceramics, arms and coins. To get there take bus 19 from Piazza XXIV Maggio in the city centre.

## Sleeping

**Ostello Ave Gratia Plena** (☎ 089 23 47 76; www.ostellodisalerno.it; Via dei Canali; dm/s/d €14/29/45; ☎) Housed in a 16th-century convent, Salerno's HI hostel is right in the heart of the *centro storico*. Inside there's a charming central courtyard and a range of bright rooms, from dorms to doubles with private bathroom. Note the 2am curfew.



**Albergo Salerno** (☎ 089 22 42 11; www.albergosalerno.com; 5th fl, Via G Vicinanza 42; s/d €60/65, with shared bathroom €39/45; ♿) This modest two-star is better inside than out. On the 5th floor of an unexceptional *palazzo*, it has large, high-ceilinged rooms and a bright communal seating area, complete with sofas and glossy mags. Air-con costs extra but in summer rooms are provided with small fans.

**Hotel Plaza** (☎/fax 089 22 44 77; www.plazasalerno.it; Piazza Vittorio Veneto 42; s/d €65/100) The Plaza is convenient and comfortable, a stone's throw from the train station. It's a friendly place and the decent-sized rooms, with their gleaming bathrooms, are pretty good value for money. Those round the back have terraces overlooking the city and, beyond, the mountains.

## Eating

Head to the lively medieval centre, where you'll find everything from traditional, family-run trattorias to jazzy wine bars, pubs and expensive restaurants.

**Pizza Margherita** (☎ 089 22 88 80; Corso Garibaldi 201; pizzas from €5.50, lunchtime menu €7) It looks like a bland canteen but this is one of Salerno's most popular lunch spots. Locals regularly queue for the lavish lunchtime buffet, which on any given day might include mozzarella, salami, mussels in various guises, and a range of salads. There's also a regular menu of pizzas, pastas and main courses.

**Ristorante Santa Lucia** (☎ 089 22 56 96; Via Roma 182; meals €22; ♿ closed Mon) This is one of the best eateries on trendy Via Roma, good for delicious seafood and bubbling wood-fired pizzas. Expect classic dishes such as *linguine ai frutti di mare* (flat spaghetti with seafood) and char-grilled cuttlefish, both of which are superb. The laid-back atmosphere and friendly, efficient service add to the pleasure.

**Pinocchio** (☎ 089 22 99 64; Lungomare Trieste 56; meals €24; ♿ Sat-Thu) This relaxed seafront trattoria has a good local reputation for its nononsense Italian food and bubbly atmosphere. Seafood is the speciality but there's also a decent selection of fail-safe meats – sausages, steak and *scaloppine* (breaded veal). In summer tables are set out down a side street; in winter action moves into the cheery interior.

## Getting There & Away

### BOAT

Between April and October, ferries and hydrofoils run from the Porto Turistico (200m

down the pier from Piazza della Concordia) to Amalfi (€5) and Positano (€7). Buy tickets from the booths by the embarkation points.

Departures for Capri (€16.50) and Ischia (€19) leave from Molo Manfredi at the Porto Commerciale. Contact the tourist office for current schedules.

### BUS

SITA buses for Amalfi (€1.80, 1¼ hours, at least hourly) depart from Piazza Vittorio Veneto, in front of the train station, stopping en route at Vietri sul Mare, Cetara, Maiori and Minori. The Naples service, however, departs from outside **Bar Cioffi** (Corso Garibaldi 134), where you buy your €3.20 ticket.

**CSTP** (☎ 089 48 70 01; www.cstp.it in Italian) bus 50 runs from Piazza Vittorio Veneto to Pompeii (€1.80, one hour, 15 daily). For Paestum (€2.90, one hour 20 minutes, 14 daily) take bus 34 from Piazza della Concordia.

**Buonotourist** (☎ 199 68 06 80; www.buonotourist.it) runs daily services to Naples' Capodichino airport, departing from the train station. Tickets (€7) can be bought on board; journey time is one hour.

### CAR & MOTORCYCLE

Salerno is on the A3 between Naples and Reggio di Calabria, which is toll-free from Salerno southwards.

### TRAIN

Salerno is a major stop on southbound routes to Calabria, Basilicata and Puglia. There are regular trains to Naples (€6.50, 35 minutes, half-hourly), Rome (€22.50, 2½ hours, hourly), and Reggio di Calabria (€32, 4½ hours, 15 daily).

## Getting Around

Walking is the most sensible option; from the train station it's a 1.2km walk along Corso Vittorio Emanuele II to the historic centre.

If you want to hire a car there's a **Eurocar** (☎ 089 258 07 75; www.eurocar.com; Via G Vicinanza) agency not far from the train station.

# SOUTH OF SALERNO

## PAESTUM

Paestum's unforgettable Unesco-listed temples are among the best-preserved monuments of Magna Graecia, the Greek colony



that once covered much of southern Italy. An easy day trip from Salerno or Agropoli, they are one of the region's most iconic sights, absolutely not to be missed.

Paestum, or Poseidonia as the city was originally called (in honour of Poseidon, the Greek god of the sea), was founded in the 6th century BC by Greek settlers and fell under Roman control in 273 BC. It became an important trading port until the fall of the Roman Empire, when periodic outbreaks of malaria and savage raids by the Saracens led its weakened citizens to abandon the town.

Its temples were rediscovered in the late 18th century by road builders – who proceeded to plough their way right through the ruins. However, the road did little to alter the state of the surrounding area, which remained full of malarial swamps, teeming with snakes and scorpions, until well into the 20th century.

The **tourist office** (☎ 0828 81 10 16; www.infopaestum.it; Via Magna Grecia 887; 🕒 9am–7pm daily Jul & Aug, 9am–4pm Mon–Fri Sep–May) has plenty of practical information on Paestum and the Costiera Cilentana.

## Sights

### THE RUINS

Tickets to the **ruins** (admission €4, incl museum €6.50; 🕒 9am–1hr before sunset) are sold at the main entry point, near the tourist office, or, in winter, from the museum, where you can also hire an audioguide (€4).

The first temple you encounter on entering from the main entrance is the 6th-century-BC **Tempio di Cerere** (Temple of Ceres). The smallest of the three temples, it served for a time as a Christian church.

Heading south, you pass the **agorà** (piazza), which contained the city's most important monument, a shrine to Poseidon known as the **heroon**. Nearby, a sunken area marks where once a public **swimming pool** stood, part of a larger sports campus.

The grassy rectangular area south of the pool is the **foro** (forum), the heart of the Roman city. Among the partially standing buildings are a vast domestic housing area, an Italic temple, the Bouleuterion (where the Roman senate used to meet) and, further south, the amphitheatre.

The **Tempio di Nettuno** (Temple of Neptune), dating from about 450 BC, is the largest and best preserved of the three temples; only

parts of its inside walls and roof are missing. Although originally attributed to Neptune, recent studies have claimed that it was, in fact, dedicated to Apollo.

Next door, the so-called **basilica** (in reality, a temple to the goddess Hera) is Paestum's oldest surviving monument. Dating to the middle of the 6th century BC, and with nine columns across and 18 along the sides, it's a majestic building. Just to its east you can, with a touch of imagination, make out remains of the temple's sacrificial altar.

In its time the city was ringed by an impressive 4.7km of walls, subsequently built and rebuilt by both Lucanians and Romans. The most intact section is south of the ruins themselves.

### MUSEO DI PAESTUM

Just east of the ruins, the **museum** (☎ 0828 81 10 23; admission €4, incl ruins €6.50; 🕒 8.45am–7pm, closed 1st & 3rd Mon of month) houses a collection of much-weathered metopes (bas-relief friezes), including 33 of the original 36 from the **Tempio di Argiva Hera** (Temple of Argive Hera), 9km north of Paestum, of which virtually nothing else remains. The star exhibit, however, is the 5th-century-BC Tomba del Truffatore (Tomb of the Diver), whose depiction of a diver in midair is thought to represent the passage of life to death.

## Sleeping & Eating

**Camping Villaggio dei Pini** (☎ 0828 81 10 30; www.campingvillaggiodeipini.com; Via Torre; camp sites per person/tent €7.50/13, 2-person bungalows per week from €300) One of the many camp sites on the coast, this well-equipped ground is about 1km from the ruins. With its volleyball/football pitch, private beach, pizzeria, snack bar and live entertainment, it ticks all the boxes for a lively stay.

**Hotel Villa Rita** (☎/fax 0828 81 10 81; www.hotelvillarita.it; Zona Archeologica 5; s/d €62/88; 🕒 Mar–Oct; 📍 🚰) An oasis of verdant calm in the midst of the summer chaos, this relaxed hotel is set in a 0.8-hectare park near the ruins. Run by an urbane English-speaker, it offers 19 cool, white rooms, a decent restaurant and an outdoor swimming pool.

**Ristorante Nettuno** (☎ 0828 81 10 28; Via Principe di Piemonte; meals €28) Ivy-clad Nettuno stands guard over the southeastern entry to the ruins. It's one of the best of the on-site restaurants with a full menu of meat and fish, although the

star of the show is the locally produced *mozzarella di bufala*. You'll know it's fresh from the sweet smell of buffalo wafting in from the farm down the road.

### Getting There & Away

The best way to get to Paestum by public transport is to take **CSTP** (☎ 089 48 70 01; www.cstp.it in Italian) bus 34 from Salerno (€2.90, one hour 20 minutes, 14 daily) or, if approaching from the south, the same bus from Agropoli (€1.30, 15 minutes, 14 daily). **Autolinee SCAT** (☎ 0974 83 84 15) and **Giuliano** (☎ 0974 83 61 85) also serve Paestum from Agropoli.

If you're driving you could take the A3 from Salerno and exit for the SS18 at Battipaglia. Better, and altogether more pleasant, is the Litoranea, the minor road that hugs the coast. From the A3 take the earlier exit for Pontecagnano and follow the signs for Agropoli and Paestum.

### COSTIERA CILENTANA

Southeast of the Gulf of Salerno, the coastal plains begin to give way to wilder, jagged cliffs and unspoiled scenery, a taste of what lies further on in the stark hills of Basilicata and the wooded peaks of Calabria. Inland, dark mountains loom over the remote highlands of the Parco Nazionale del Cilento e Vallo di Diano, one of Campania's best-kept secrets.

CSTP buses leave Salerno for Sapri, on the regional boundary between Campania and Basilicata. Trains heading south from Salerno also stop at most towns on the Costiera Cilentana (Cilento Coast), including Agropoli (€2.90), Ascea (€4.60) and Sapri (€6.20).

By car take the SS18, which connects Agropoli with Velia via the inland route, or the SS267, which hugs the coast.

### Agropoli

pop 20,300

The main town on the southern stretch of the coast, Agropoli makes a good base for Paestum and the beaches to the northwest. Popular with holidaying Italians, it's an otherwise tranquil place with a ramshackle medieval core on a promontory overlooking the sea.

The **tourist office** (☎ 0974 82 74 71; Viale Europa 31; ☎ 9am-1pm & 3.30-8.30pm Jun-Sep, shorter hours Oct-May) can provide information on the town and its environs.

**Camping Torino** (☎ /fax 0828 81 18 51; www.villag.giotorino.it; Via Litoranea Linora; camp sites per adult/child/

tent €12/11/18; ☎ Mar-Sep) is a big, brassy camp site with all the facilities, including a pizzeria, disco and private sandy beach. It's about 6km north of Agropoli along the Litoranea road.

Agropoli's friendly hostel, **Ostello La Lanterna** (☎ /fax 0974 83 83 64; lanterna@cilento.it; Via Lanterna 8; dm/f/d per person €11.50/12.50/17; ☎ mid-Mar-Oct), is a relaxed place. Beds are in dorms, doubles or family rooms, there's a garden outside and the beach is only two minutes' walk away. Evening meals are available for €9.

Halfway between the small tourist port and the *centro storico*, **Hotel Carola** (☎ 0974 82 64 22; www.hotelcarola.it; Via Pisacane 1; s/d €62/80; ☎ ☎) is a welcoming three-star with a mix of rooms. Some are old-fashioned with 19th-century tiles and antique-style furniture; others are modern and less interesting. There's a shuttle to the local beach and the restaurant is highly rated.

Up on the headland, **Pizzeria U'Sghiz** (☎ 0974 82 45 82; Piazza Umberto I; pizzas from €2.50) is a true original, preparing pizzas with wholemeal flour. Served ready-cut, they come with the topping specified and nothing else, so if you want tomato and mozzarella you'll have to ask for them. If you don't fancy pizza, there's also a small selection of pasta and meat dishes.

### Velia

On the coast 75km south of Salerno, the Greek settlement of Elea (now Velia), was founded in the 6th century BC and later became a popular resort for wealthy Romans. The **ruins** (☎ 0974 97 23 96; Contrada Piana di Velia; admission €2; ☎ 9am-1hr before sunset Mon-Sat), topped by a tower visible for miles around, are not in great nick but merit a quick look if you're passing through.

To stay in the area your best bet is Marina di Ascea, a featureless resort that's packed to the gills in summer and all but shut in winter. A block back from the long sandy beach, **Albergo Elea** (☎ /fax 0974 97 15 77; Corso Elea 69; s €30-36, d €50-72, half-board per person €35) is one of the few hotels open year-round. It's a homely affair with modest, non-nonsense rooms and a downstairs restaurant serving simple, home-cooked food for about €20 for a three-course meal.

To get to the ruins from Marina di Ascea train station, take the local bus to Castellamare di Velia.

### South to Sapri

Continuing southwards, the road climbs, dips and curves its way through silent green hills

peppered with medieval villages. Down below, crystal waters fringe long sandy beaches.

Some 12km southeast of Ascea, **Pisciotta** is an attractive village clinging to the mountain-side. Here, amid orchards of olive and fruit trees, **Agriturismo San Carlo** (☎ /fax 0974 97 61 77; Via Noce 8; half-/full-board per person €50/55) offers lovely rustic rooms and beautiful homemade olive oil, wine and *limoncello*.

Another 25km or so further on, **Palinuro** is named after Palinurus, Aeneas' pilot, who was killed there after falling off his ship under the influence of a sleeping curse. A vibrant town, it boasts striking sandy beaches and some unforgettable coastal scenery, particularly around Capo Palinuro.

A little further still, where the road turns steeply inland to pass through San Giovanni a Piro, is **Marina di Camerota**, which has a small medieval centre. From there it's another 25km to Sapri, an uninspiring resort near the border with Basilicata.

## PARCO NAZIONALE DEL CILENTO E VALLO DI DIANO

Stretching from the coast up to Campania's highest peak, Monte Cervati (1898m), and beyond to the regional border with Basilicata, the Parco Nazionale del Cilento e Vallo di Diano is Italy's second-largest national park. A little-explored area of barren heights and empty valleys, it's the perfect antidote to the holiday mayhem on the coast. To get the best out of it you will, however, need a car. Either that or unlimited patience and a masterful grasp of local bus timetables.

For further information stop by the tourist office (p673) in Paestum, or contact the **Associazione Cilentana Prodotti di Qualità** (☎ 0974 94 27 47) in the village of Valle dell'Angelo for details on trekking opportunities.

About 25km northeast of Paestum, the WWF **Oasi Naturalistica di Persano** (☎ 0828 97 46 84; ☎ tours 10am, 11am, 3pm Wed, Sat & Sun Oct-May, 9am & 5pm Jun-Sep) covers 110 hectares of wetlands on the river Sele. A hot spot for ornithologists, it's home to a wide variety of birds, both resident and seasonal. Signs direct you there from the SS18.

There are also two cave systems worth exploring. About 20km northeast of Paestum, the **Grotte di Castelcivita** (☎ 0828 77 23 97; admission €8; ☎ tours 10am, 11am, noon, 1.30pm, 2.30pm, 3.30pm, 4.30pm, 5.30pm & 6.30pm mid-Mar–Sep, 10.30am, noon, 1.30pm, 3pm & 4.30pm Oct–mid-Mar) complex is where Spartacus is said to have taken refuge following his slave rebellion in 71 BC. There is a **De Rosa** (☎ 0828 94 10 65) bus that departs from Capaccio at 9.30am and returns at 3.25pm. By car take the SS18 from Paestum towards Salerno and follow the signs.

On the eastern edge of the park, the **Grotte dell'Angelo Pertosa** (☎ 0975 39 70 37; www.grottedellangelo.sa.it in Italian; tours from €10; ☎ 9am–7pm Mar-Oct, 9am–4pm Nov-Feb) is a 2.5km-long system bristling with stalactites and stalagmites. A SITA bus leaves for Pertosa at 9am from Salerno; another will take you back at 2.30pm. By car take the A3 southbound from Salerno, exit at Petina and follow the SS19 for 9km.

Continuing south on the A3 autostrada, **Padula** harbours one of the region's hidden jewels, the magnificent **Certosa di San Lorenzo** (☎ 0975 7 77 45; admission €4; ☎ 9am–7pm Wed–Mon). Also known as the Certosa di Padula, this is one of Europe's biggest monasteries, with a huge central courtyard, wood-panelled library and sumptuously frescoed chapels. Begun in the 14th century and modified over the centuries, it was abandoned in the 19th century, then suffered further degradation as a children's holiday home and later a concentration camp.

Up in the village proper, the **Museo Joe Petrosino** (☎ 0975 08 10 09; www.joepetrosino.org in Italian; Via Giuseppe Petrosino; admission €2; ☎ 10am–1pm & 2.30–7pm Jun, Sep & Oct, 9.30am–7.30pm Jul & Aug, 10am–1pm & 3–6pm Nov–May) pays tribute to Joe Petrosino, Padula's most celebrated son. The unexceptional village house where this early fighter against the US Mafia was born contains a small museum recording *'la vita e morte di un detective'* (the life and death of a detective). Petrosino was gunned down in 1909 by the leader of the local clan as he returned to his native country. **Lamanna** (☎ 0975 52 04 26) buses run from Salerno to Padula and (less frequently) to Teggiano.

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