

Pompeil Vesuvius - Herculanoum

Vesuvius - Herculaneum



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Should I visit Pompeii or Herculaneum?

The biggest difference between Pompeii and Herculaneum is size: the ruins of Pompeii cover about 44 square hectares, while Herculaneum covers just 4.

Pompeii was an important city and trade center, while Herculaneum was a small resort town without the large public buildings (forum, amphitheater, theaters, gym) found in Pompeii. **However, Herculaneum is in a much better state of preservation** due to the deep layer of ash and dust that covered the site, filling the buildings without damaging them. Pompeii was heavily battered by falling rocks and hot air that knocked down upper floors of buildings and incinerated wood, both of which are still intact at Herculaneum.

All things considered, **if you only have time to see one site**, **choose Pompeii**. Herculaneum is a good alternative if you don't want to do too much walking or if the temperatures are particularly scorching, as it has more shade than Pompeii. **We do not recommend visiting Pompeii and Herculaneum in one day, as it is simply too tiring.**

Hours for Pompeii and Herculaneum

April through October: 9am - 7:30pm (last entry at 6pm) **November through March**: 9am - 5pm (last entry at 3:30pm)

Closed: 1 January, 25 December

Tickets can be purchased at the ticket offices at the entrance to each site or through the online ticket office. **Do not purchase tours or tickets from street vendors** who may approach you at the Circumvesuviana train station!

Skip-the-line Tickets for Pompeii Skip-the-line Tickets for Herculaneum

Prices

Pompeii ruins daily ticket: Full price € 18; discounted € 2

Herculaneum ruins daily ticket: Full price € 16; discounted € 2. Mastercard and Visa are accepted. Entrance is free to all EU citizens under 18. EU citizens under 24 have a special discount.

Luggage deposit: Next to the ticket office at the entrance, there is a free baggage check. Bags or backpacks larger than 30x30x15 cm cannot be brought into either Herculaneum or Pompeii.



The Pompeii and Herculaneum Archaeological Sites Compared



Pompeii Recommended because:

- It's a unique example of a perfectly preserved Roman city with temples, theaters, homes, restaurants, and public buildings.
- More sites open to the public and a greater variety of architectural styles.
- You can experience first-hand the majesty of a Roman forum, theater, and amphitheater.



Herculaneum Recommended because:

- It's a small town that was a resort destination in ancient times, and can be visited in less than two hours.
- There are multi-story houses, wooden furnishings and decorations, and perfectly preserved mosaic and sculptures to admire.

Not recommended if:

- You only have an hour or two, as it takes a significant amount of time and energy to visit.
- It's a particularly hot day, as there is little shade.

Not recommended if:

- You only have time to visit either Pompeii or Herculaneum; we do not recommend attempting both in one day.
- You want to explore it all, as many of the houses and buildings are not open to the public.

Visiting the Ruins of Pompeii

The archaeological ruins of **Pompeii cover around 440,000 square meters**, a vast area that would take at least three full days to explore completely. Remember that Pompeii is an entire buried city with squares, temples, baths, public buildings, private villas, and shops. Just a visit to the city's forum takes about an hour.

That said, you can easily follow **a shorter itinerary that includes some of the buried city's most famous sites**, giving you an idea of what daily life was like in this Roman city. Here we suggest a few sites that you should include during your visit to the ruins, marking them with the same names as included on the free map provided at the ticket office and info point at the entrance to the ruins.

A Brief History of Pompeii

Pompeii was probably founded by the **Oscans** around the 8th century BC. This ancient Italic people settled on the southern slopes of Mount Vesuvius along the banks of the **Sarno River**, which was navigable at the time. Pompeii became an important commercial center early on, catching the interest of the invading Greeks and Etruscans. The Etruscans were conquered on the waters off Cuma, and the city came under domination by the Samnites in the 5th century BC.

As a **Samnite** city, Pompeii entered into the **Nucerine League** and the tufo stone city walls were both expanded and fortified, allowing the city itself to grow. Pompeii became known as an important exporter of olive oil and wine, benefiting from the Mediterranean free market under Roman protection.

After the end of the **Samnite Wars in 80 BC**, the city came under **Roman dominance**. In 89 BC **Publius Cornelius Silla** took up residency there along with a group of veterans, renaming the city **Colonia Venerea Pompeianorum Sillana**. During its Roman period, the city reached its architectural and economic peak, transforming into one of **the most popular recreational and resort towns of the Roman aristocracy**. During the Imperial Age, many wealthy Roman families moved to Pompeii, and buildings like the **Temple of Fortuna Augusta** and the **Building of Eumachia** are testimony to this influx. Under the **Emperor Nero**, the city was seriously damaged due to a strong earthquake in 62 AD, and rebuilding immediately began. Work was interrupted on 24 August of 79 AD by the disastrous eruption of **Mount Vesuvius**.



"A cloud, from which mountain was uncertain, at this distance (but it was found afterwards to come from Mount Vesuvius), was ascending, the appearance of which I cannot give you a more exact description of than by likening it to that of a pine tree, for it shot up to a great height in the form of a very tall trunk, which spread itself out at the top into a sort of branches; occasioned, I imagine, either by a sudden gust of air that impelled it, the force of which decreased as it advanced upwards, or the cloud itself being pressed back again by its own weight, expanded in the manner I have mentioned; it appeared sometimes bright and sometimes dark and spotted, according as it was either more or less impregnated with earth and cinders."

(Pliny the Younger)

Excavation of Pompeii began in 1748 under **King of Naples Charles III of Bourbon**, who was interested in the project's prestige for the royal house and did not undertake the dig with particular scientific or systematic vigor. During the French occupation at the beginning of the 19th century, work at the excavation increased, though was halted almost completely with the return of the **Bourbon kings**. During this period, the discovery of the **House of the Faun**, with its excellent mosaic depicting the **Battle of Alexander** at Issus, created such a stir that archaeological work began again at the site, this This time, scientific methodology, careful record keeping, and plaster casting were all used. From 1924 to 1961, work was overseen by Italian archaeologist **Amedeo Maiuri** and included important discoveries.

Over recent years, excavations of new areas in the site have been halted and work is concentrated on restoring and maintaining buildings already unearthed.

Visiting Pompeii with Kids

It isn't easy to get around Pompeii with a stroller or pushchair, as the ancient Roman roads that cross the city are not navigable on wheels. Wheelchair users can follow a special marked route with the free map provided at the entrance, and the same itinerary can be followed with a stroller. Regardless, the best way to visit with infants and young children is by using a carrier or backpack. There are a number of **Baby Points** inside the archaeological park, which are small bungalows marked on the map. You can request keys at the park entrance and use these spaces to change and feed your infant in complete privacy.

Where to Eat

If you have decided to dedicate a full day to Pompeii, the best option for lunch is packing a picnic to eat inside the park. On the park map available at the entrance, you will find a number of picnic areas marked around the ruins. Large bags are not allowed inside, so you will have to pack your food and beverages in small bags or backpacks. **Purchase your supplies in Naples or Sorrento, as the snack bars inside the park are expensive.**

In **Sorrento**, the **Salumeria Apreda** (located on Via Tasso in the historic center and at the beginning of Via del Mare) makes excellent **Caprese sandwiches** and often has "casatiello", a soft savory bread baked with diced ham, traditionally made at Easter. In Naples, pick up a sandwich at a cafè or take-away near the **Stazione Centrale**, or stop in **Eccellenze della Costiera** to choose some traditional sweet treats from the Amalfi Coast.

For a sit-down meal: **Hortus** €€, located along the road between the train station and the **Porta Marina** entrance, is popular among tourists. It offers a number of take-away options for a light lunch, or local dishes served in the pleasantly cool citrus garden.

Caupona €€ if you want to stay on point, walk 5 minutes from **Villa dei Misteri** to this restaurant opposite **Piazza Esedra** that serves ancient recipes created by the Roman gourmet **Marcus Gavius Apicius**. Meals are served on terracotta plates by waiters dressed in period garb, against the backdrop of ancient music and frescoed walls inspired by Pompeii.

Wine tasting & lunch in a vineyard

For a lunch beak between the archaelogical sites and Vesuvius' crater, we recommend a stop at the Cantina del Vesuvio Winery.

2-Hour, 4-Hour, and 7-Hour Itineraries

Sites to visit from the **Porta Marina Inferiore in Piazza Esedra entrance** (the second entrance from the Circumvesuviana "**Pompei Villa Dei Misteri**" stop along the **Sorrento - Naples line**). We have created different **color-coded routes** that take in highlights based on how much time you have to visit.

The main sights to visit

- Entrance: Porta Marina Inferiore in Piazza Esedra
- Quadriporticus of the theatres or Gladiators Barracks (VIII 11)
- Large Theatre (VIII 10)
- Small Theatre Odeon (VIII 12)
- House of the Menande (1 7)
- House of Casca Longus (I 2)
- Fullery of Stephanus (I 3)
- ▼ House of the Lararium of Achilles (I 4)
- Garden of the Fugitives (I 16)
- Necropolis of Nocera Gate (II 10)
- Amphitheater (II 5)
- ▼ Praedia of Giulia Felice (II 3)
- House of Venus in the shell (II 2
- House of Octavius Quartio (II 1)
- ▼ House of the Epidii (IX 5)
- Stabian Baths (VII 16)
- Lupanar (VII 18)
- ▼ House of the Faun (VI 1)
- House of the Vettii (VI 11)
- House of the Golden Cupids (VI 12)
- House of the Ara Maxima (VI 13)
- From Torre XI up to Herculaneum Gate (VI 16)
- ▼ Villa of the Mysteries (VI 19)
- Forum Baths (VII 10)
- Forum (VII 6a)
- Temple of Jupiter (VII 8)
- Forum Granary (VII 7)
- ▼ Basilica (VIII 2)
- Sanctuary of Venus (VIII 1)
- Exit: Porta Marina Superiore

Legend

If you want to take in the sights in green, your visit will last about 2 hours.

By adding the sights in yellow, your visit will double to about 4 hours.

Add the sights in red, and your total time inside the park will be about 7 hours.

The Top 10 sights are indicated in bold. The area + number from the official map is listed in parenthesis.

Download the official map

Top Ten Pompeii Sites



1) Large Theater and Odeon (VIII - 10)

Pompeii's two theaters are located in the same area of the ancient city. **The Teatro Grande (Large Theater)** is an open-air amphitheater where **Greek-Roman** plays were performed; the smaller Odeon was used for poetry and musical performances, which required a smaller and covered space for the best acoustics. Tip: stand at the middle of the Odeon's stage and speak in a normal voice. You will hear your own voice amplified as if you have spoken into a microphone.



2) Garden of the Fugitives (I- 16)

The **Orto dei Fuggiaschi** (Garden of the Fugitives) was an old quarter of the city that was been converted to vineyards as Pompeii grew. The name is an homage to the bodies of 13 victims of the eruption in 79 AD who were trying to escape through **Porta Nocera** before succumbing to the ashes and stone. Their remains were discovered during excavations in 1961-62 and 1973-74, using plaster-casting methods.



3) Amphitheater (II - 5)

Built around 70 BC, Pompeii's ancient amphitheater is one of the best preserved in the world. Used for sporting events and gladiator battles, **the space could seat 20,000 spectators** in three sections of seating: the first rows were for prominent citizens, the middle rows were for the middle classes, and the summa, or the highest rows, were for the rest of the population.



4) Praedia of Giulia Felice (II - 3)

The Praedia di Giulia Felice is a large complex dating from the 1st century BC and was one of the first homes unearthed during excavations. This patrician villa has a large garden surrounding a series of residential buildings and thermal baths. The name Giulia Felice was taken from an inscription painted on the facade after the earthquake of 62 AD (today displayed in **Naples' National Archaeological Museum**) in which the owner advertises that part of the property is for rent. The lavish decorations in the residential and thermal areas are particularly beautiful.



5) Lupanar (VII - 18)

The lupanare (lupanar) is one of the most memorable sites within the ruins of Pompeii. The city's brothel was on two levels, with five small cells on the ground floor and five upstairs. Each cell had a stone bed that was topped with a mat or cushion, and above the door of each cell was an **erotic fresco** that probably depicted the specialization of the prostitute that worked in each individual cell. Though the brothel is located between two side streets, it was and still is easy to find by following the phallic symbols on the flagstones and facades of nearby buildings.



6) House of the Faun (VI - 1)

The Casa del Fauno (House of the Faun) is one of the most spectacular and largest houses in Pompeii, covering around **3,000 square meters** with areas dedicated to the villa's owners and other areas for the servants.

The name comes from a bronze satyr statue in the impluvium (a small pool for gathering rain water), and the villa has a number of statues, frescoes, and mosaics. Among the most famous is the mosaic that depicts **Alexander the Great** battling **Darius** and the **Persians at Issus**, now displayed at the **National Archaeological Museum in Naples**.



7) Villa of the Mysteries (VI - 19)

Discovered between 1909 and 1910, the **Villa dei Misteri** (Villa of the Mysteries) is one of the most captivating and mysterious in the entire ruins, and probably belonged to the Istacidii family, one of the most powerful in Pompeii during **the reign of Augustus**. The building dates from the first century BC and was built in the western residential area outside the city walls overlooking the sea. It had been renovated a number of times before the eruption in 79 AD, and is named for the Hall of Mysteries, a triclinium (dining hall) decorated with an extraordinary and enigmatic cycle of paintings,17 meters by 3 meters. The scene seems to depict a Dionysian ritual and the initiation into the cult, with the gods **Dionysus** and **Aphrodite** (or **Ariadne**) in the center of the rear wall.



8) Forum (VII - 6a)

Pompeii's Foro (Forum) is one of the most striking spots in the ancient city: a large square with triumphal arches, public buildings, the basilica, the market, the mensa ponderaria (weights and measures), and temples and buildings dedicated to **Apollo**, to **Jupiter** (the head of the former statue, dating from around 80 BC, still sits here), to **Vespasian**, to the **Public Lares**, and the **Eumachia** building.

The city's main civic, religious, and commercial activities were carried out in the forum, and, as in all Imperial cities, the space was pedestrian only and closed to wheeled vehicles.



9) Basilica (VIII - 2)

Don't be fooled by the name: in Roman times, a basilica was **the most important public building in the city**, used as a type of courtroom where the judge sat on a raised dais above the sides. This is also where commercial contracts were drawn up. The space, dating from the second century BC, resembled a covered forum with columns. It could be used for the same civic, religious, and commercial functions in case of inclement weather.



10) Sanctuary of Venus (VIII - 1)

This important sacred site dedicated to **Venus**, protectress of the city and of navigation, was established in the second half of the second century BC on the plain of Pompeii facing the **Sarno Valley** and the sea. In the first half of the first century AD, the building reached its height of splendor with a series of expansions, renovations, and marble decorations. The temple housed a large gold lamp, probably donated by **Nero** and his wife, **Poppea**, to the cult, now displayed in the **National Archaeological Museum in Naples.**























Cantina del Vesuvio Winery

Wine tasting & lunch in a vineyards.

For a lunch beak between the archaelogical sites and the **crater of Vesuvius**, we recommend a stop at the **Cantina del Vesuvio** Winery, which produces local **Organic Lacryma Christi DOP** wine of Vesuvius.

They offer winery tours and a tasting lunch each day, featuring their own wines paired with local dishes. If you can't reach the winery by car, there is a **free shuttle service** from the **Circumvesuviana train station** in **Torre Annunziata Oplonti** (2 stops after Pompeii going towards Naples).

Cantina del Vesuvio

Shop: Every day from 9am to 6pm

Tasting: Every day from 11am to 4pm (last reservation)

Cooking class: 1 class every day: 1:30 pm (reservation required)

www.cantinadelvesuvio.it

+39 081 5369041









Mount Vesuvius

Mount Vesuvius is one of only two active volcanoes in continental Europe and stands about **1281 meters tall**, with a symmetrical central cone and steep wooden slopes. The whole of the **Mount Vesuvius National Park** is both beautiful and productive, dotted with small farms and wineries planted with heirloom varietals boasting a unique terroir. Visiting the crater is a must, and tourists from across the globe climb the path each year to peer into its depths.

The curious have been climbing the slopes of **Mount Vesuvius** since the 1600s, as the crater was considered one **of the more "exotic" stops on the Grand Tour**, attracting tourists from northern Europe who had never seen a volcano. Between the 18th and 19th centuries, the ruins of Pompeii were discovered by chance, and a **trip to Pompeii-Vesuvius became a cultural attraction as well**. Many travellers who were drawn to the unearthed city also wanted to see the volcano that had destroyed it, and excursions up the mountainside were a huge draw.

From the 18th century to today, hiking up Mount Vesuvius is one of the most popular activities in the area; the **Volcanological Observatory**, founded in 1841, and the official **Mountain Guide Association**, founded in 1855, have expert guides able to accompany tourists up the final stretch of the mountain trail.

Still today, the most popular route among visitors is the trail up the highest reaches of the cone to the rim of the crater, a stretch that is not particularly difficult, can be undertaken by anyone, and does not require hiking experience. The trail is about 4 km up and back, with a change in altitude of about 140 meters and an average slope of 14%; the trail reaches 1,170 meters above sea level.

There are buses and shuttles that climb the lower slope of Mount Vesuvius, stopping at the ticket office at 1,050 meters above sea level. The trail begins here, offering views of the Vesuvius park overlooking the **Tirone Reserve**, the **Bay of Naples**, and the **Campanian Plain**. About halfway up the trail you can begin to see **Punta Nasone** and, on the opposite side, **Cognoli di Ottaviano** towering over the **Valle dell'Inferno**. Continue along the broom-lined route to the short climb under maritime pines and birch trees to the **Forest Service Post**. Pass this to the crater rim with its breathtaking view over the entire Bay of Naples, Pompeii ruins, and Apennine mountains.

Visiting the Crater on Mount Vesuvius - Opening & Hours

- January, February, November, December: daily from 9am to 3pm
- March and October: daily from 9am to 4pm
- April, May, June, September: daily from 9am to 5pm
- **July and August:** daily from 9am to 6pm

 Barring inclement weather or unforeseen circumstances, the trail to the crater is open all year round, including Sundays and holidays.
- **Ticket price**: € 10 adults, € 8 students
- Free: children shorter than 120 cm., disabled and companion





Crater on Mount Vesuvius

Bus to Mount Vesuvius Crater

Visiting the Crater on Mount Vesuvius

Add a trip up to the crater before your Pompeii or Herculaneum visit!

We suggest visiting **Mount Vesuvius in the morning** and continuing on to **Pompeii** and **Herculaneum** in the afternoon; buses between Vesuvius and the archaeological sites run until 3 in the afternoon. Be sure to wear comfortable shoes and clothing appropriate for the mountain peak!

From Pompeii to Mount Vesuvius

Busvia del Vesuvio: departs from the **Circumvesuviana train station** at **Pompei Villa dei Misteri** and arrives at the entrance to the **Parco Nazionale del Vesuvio**. Here passengers transfer to a small 4x4 eco-bus which continues along the historic "**Matrone**" road to the visitor center at 1,050 meters above sea level. From here, passengers hike with a guide to the crater.

Busvia Vesuvius from Pompeii

Departures: every hour from 9am to 3pm

Price: €22 (bus + ecobus + entrance fee to the Parco Nazionale del Vesuvio)

Herculaneum: Ticket price €11, reduced €5,50

Closed: November to February

www.busviadelvesuvio.com

From Herculaneum to Mount Vesuvius

The bus departs from the **Circumvesuviana train station at Ercolano** and arrives at the visitor arrival area on Vesuvius at 1,050 meters above sea level. From here, you will hike with a guide to the crater (about a 20-minute walk along an easy trail).

Vesuvio Express from Ercolano

Departures: every 40 minutes beginning at 9:30am

Price: €20 (includes bus and entrance fee to the Parco Nazionale del Vesuvio)

Closed: in winter, contact for more information

Vesuvio Express Tickets



Visiting The Ruins of Herculaneum

As opposed to Pompeii, it's possible to visit all of Herculaneum in just a few hours. The archaeological park an ideal stop for those who have limited time but want to experience the thrill of walking in the footsteps of the ancient Romans!

Herculaneum has been preserved like no other site in the world, not even nearby Pompeii. The city was buried beneath 16 meters of ash and mud during the eruption of **Mount Vesuvius** in 79 AD, and this layer of detritus saved two-story domus homes with the internal architecture and décor intact. This included features in wood and marble, decorations, jewelry, and even organic remains like food, providing a unique view into the daily lives of the ancient population of **Herculaneum**.

We suggest spending at least a half day exploring the Herculaneum Archaeological Site; **follow our itinerary to see the most important buildings in the site in 2-3 hours**. In addition to an itinerary, we suggest the top sights to see along the route on this page, which are marked with the same numbers as the official map provided free of charge at the entrance to the ruins. You can also download the official map following the link below.





A Brief History of Herculaneum

Herculaneum is named for the mythical Greek god **Hercules** who, according to the legend told by Dionysius of Halicarnassus, founded the city in 1243 BC. Historic analysis, however, suggests that the city was founded by the Oscans or the Etruscans in the 7th century BC, conquered by the Samnites in the 5th century BC. **In 90 BC the city was dominated by Rome and transformed into a municipium.** In the final years of the Roman Republic, Herculaneum reached the height of its splendor thanks to its coastal location, clean air, and mild climate, making it a **popular resort town for many of Rome's patrician families**. The city was vibrant and densely populated when the earthquake struck in 62 AD, causing serious damage; work to rebuild the city was still going on when the tragic eruption of Mount Vesuvius happened in 79 AD.

The cloud of toxic gases from the eruption wiped out the inhabitants, while the entire city was literally sealed under a flow of ash and volcanic rock 16 meters deep that solidifiedi.

This process left organic remains such as fabric, food, vegetation, and wooden structures preserved almost perfectly intact. The discovery of the ruins at Herculaneum was a complete accident: while a well was being dug in 1707 by order of **Emmanuel Maurice**, **Prince of Lorraine**, a number of marble fragments and statues that once decorated the ancient theater of Herculaneum were unearthed. In 1738, work began again under **Charles III of Bourbon** led by the Spanish military engineer **De Alcubierre**.

In 1755, after a number of important discoveries were made, the **Accademia Ercolanense** was established, and was active until 1792. Excavations were suspended a number of times over the years until 1927, when the site began to be explored in a more systematic way. Important artifacts were unearthed in the 1980s, along with sites like the Temple of Venus, the baths, and the ancient Greek port where the inhabitants tried to find refuge in 79 AD. The site has been home to intense excavation since 2000, especially around the **Villa of the Papyrus** and the library.









Visiting the Herculaneum Archaeological Park with Kids

Visiting the Herculaneum Archaeological Park with small children can be difficult as the site's ancient Roman roads and sidewalks are not easy to navigate with strollers and pushchairs. We suggest using an infant carrier or backpack for children who are too young to walk, and leaving any wheeled strollers at the free bag check area at the entrance. Otherwise, you can follow the walkway that encircles the perimeter of the site with a stroller or pushchair, viewing the ruins from above.

Older children enjoy visiting the **MAV (Virtual Archaeological Museum)**, located a short walk from the entrance to the Herculaneum Archaeological Park.

This museum has a virtual, interactive exhibition that recreates ancient Herculaneum as it was before the violent eruption in 79 AD that destroyed the city. There are 70 multimedia displays with reconstructions, installations, and holograms that illustrate the **Herculaneum**, **Pompeii**, **Stabia**, **Baia**, and **Capri** ruins in an entertaining and engaging way.

MAV

- Hours: Wednesdays Sundays from 9am to 5:00pm (last entry)
- **Tickets:** Museum + 3D Film: EUR 10 adults; €8 children under 13, seniors over 65, students, teachers, and Artecard members.
- **Group tickets:** (minimum 15 people): Museum + 3D Film EUR 8/person; Museum only EUR 6/person; 3D Film only €5/person.
- Family tickets: (2 adults + 2 children): Museum + 3D Film €30.

Museum tickets can be purchased at the ticket office or online.

Purchase MAV tickets online





Where to eat

There are no picnic areas or restaurants/cafés inside the Herculaneum Archaeological Park. Before entering, there is a small snack bar next to the book shop where you can purchase beverages and snacks.

To eat nearby, you can walk to a number of restaurants and cafés in the immediate area for either a sit-down meal or take-away.

We suggest:

Viva Lo Re €€. Located along Corso Resina, has an excellent winee cellar with a number of Italian and international labels and a menu that varies weekly.

Tubba Catubba $\in \in$. This delicious, informal eatery is also on Corso Resina, just minutes from the ruins. It serves fish, meat, and traditional regional dishes.

Pizzeria Luna Caprese €€. For a delicious Neapolitan pizza at great prices, this is an ideal choice.









Two-to-Three-Hour Itinerary

Sites to visit beginning from the Corso Resina 187 entrance (Circumvesuviana "Ercolano Scavi" stop long the Sorrento - Naples line)

The main sights to visit

- Entrance: Corso Resina 187
- ▼ House of Argus (40)
- ▼ House of the Skeleton (42)
- ▼ Thermopolium (38)
- Men's Baths (26)
- Double Atrium House (25)
- Hall of the Augustals (24)
- House of the Beautiful Courtyard (28)
- House of Neptune and Amphitrite (29)
- ▼ Women's Baths (27)
- Samnite House (31)
- House of the Wooden Partition (36)
- Large Taberna (10)
- ▼ House of Relief of Telephus (7)
- House of the Deers (8)
- Terrace of M. Nonius Balbus (2)
- Fornici (1)
- Exit: Corso Resina 187

Legend

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If you want to take in the sights in green, your visit will last about 2 hours.

The main sights are indicated in bold. The area + number from the official map is listed in parenthesis.

Download the official map

Top Herculaneum Sites



1) Men's Baths (26)

The Terme Centrali (Central Baths) date from the second half of the 1st century BC and were fully excavated in 1931. Like all baths, they were divided into areas for men (Termi Maschili) and for women. Walk through the apodyterium (changing rooms), with its wall niches for storing clothing, to the three bathing areas: the frigidarium (cold room), the caldarium absidato (hot room), and the tepidarium (warm room). The latter boasts a beautiful black and white mosaic depicting Triton surrounded by dolphins, octopi, squids, and a cupid.



2) Hall of the Augustals (24)

This magnificent square structure was seat to the **College of the Augustales**, free men who were devotees of the cult of the **Emperor Augustus**. Here you'll encounter columns, arches, cocciopesto floors, and two splendid frescoes: on the left wall, there is a depiction of Hercules entering **Mount Olympus** accompanied by **Jupiter**, **Juno**, and **Minerva**; the fresco on the right wall depicts **Hercules** wrestling **Achelous**. The skeleton of the building's custodian was found in his quarters, laid out on the bed.



3) Samnite House (31)

One of the oldest houses in the city, the House of the Samnites was built in the 2nd century BC and is famous for its **beautiful Greek-style atrium painted in the Fourth Style** (characteristic for its depiction of fantastical architecture and dramatic scenery), floors in cocciopesto, marble impluvium (rainwater pool), and a faux loggia upstairs with three sides lined in lonic columns and the fourth (east) side open.



4) House of the Wooden Partition (36)

The name of this home comes from the **wooden partition** (**tramezzo di legno**) that survived the eruption and is still standing in its original location. This folding door separated the atrium from the rest of the room, lending the inhabitants privacy, and has a series of folding panels with brass handles and holders for hanging lanterns.



5) House of Relief of Telephus (7)

Built between 27 BC and 14 AD on the panoramic ridge overlooking the marina, this three-story home was decorated with a number of sculptures from the Neo-Attic school, including one with a relief of **Telephus (Rilievo di Telefo)**, son of the legendary founder of the city, **Hercules**.

The atrium is lined with columns supporting the upper floor. The spaces between them were decorated with oscilla, marble discs with reliefs of Dionysus, used to guard against evil spirits.



6) Fornici (1)

The fornici were the port warehouses (also used to shelter boats) located along the beach, which was about 500 meters closer to the city in Roman times. In 1980, 300 human skeletons were unearthed here belonging to residents attempting to flee the eruption in 79 AD who were killed by the scorching clouds of toxic smoke and ash created by the volcano.

Along with their remains and personal objects such as **jewelry** and **coins**, a nine-meter-long Roman ship was also found. It contained the skeletons of the rower and a soldier with his belt, two swords, a chisel, and a purse with coins.













Getting to Pompeii, Herculaneum, and Vesuvius

The easiest way to reach both Pompeii and Herculaneum is the Circumvesuviana train that runs between Naples and Sorrento. From the Circumvesuviana stations, you can easily walk to the ruins or catch a bus for the Mount Vesuvius National Park. You can also arrive by car; there are parking areas and lots near the entrance to the ruins and the Vesuvius crater.

Getting to Pompeii and Herculaneum from Sorrento or Naples

The Circumvesuviana train departs from Naples and Sorrento and has stops near the archaeological parks in Pompeii and Herculaneum.

In Sorrento, the station is located in the center of town opposite **Piazza Angelina Lauro** and is the **only train line between Sorrento and Naples**, so you can't get on the wrong train! Trains depart about every 30 minutes and the trip to Pompeii takes about 30 minutes; for Herculaneum, the trip takes about 50 minutes.

You can take the same train from Naples for Pompeii and Herculaneum: trains depart from **track 3** of the underground **Circumvesuviana station beneath the Naples Central train station in Piazza Garibaldi.** Check the display that indicates which train is departing and board the Sorrento - Pompei line, otherwise you may accidentally catch a train to Sarno rather than **Pompeii!**

Getting to the Ruins from the Circumvesuviana Station

Pompeii: If you are headed to the ruins at Pompeii, the **Porta Marina Superiore entrance** is directly opposite the **Pompei Scavi Villa dei Misteri station** along the Circumvesuviana line, and the **Porta Marina Inferiore (Piazza Esedra)** entrance, where our recommended itinerary begins, is a few meters further down.

Skip-the-line tickets to Pompeii ruins

Herculaneum: If you are heading to the ruins at Herculaneum, exit the Ercolano Scavi station and walk along **Via 4 Novembre** for about 5 minutes to the entrance to the ruins.

Skip-the-line tickets to Herculaneum ruins

Getting to Pompeii and Herculaneum by Car

The highway A3 Pompei Ovest exit leads directly to the archaeological park entrance, and there are a number of parking lots near the entrances. Getting to **Herculaneum** by car is a bit more complicated, as you have to navigate the traffic through the center of the modern town. Once near the entrance to the archaeological ruins, there are a number of parking lots.

Getting to Mount Vesuvius by Car

If you are arriving by car, follow the signs and park at the parking area at around 1,000 meters above sea level, the highest elevation private vehicles are allowed to drive. Here you have to pay for parking (€ 5) and can buy round-trip tickets for the shuttles that take visitors from the parking area to the ticket office for the **Mount Vesuvius National Park**. You can also walk up, but we recommend taking the shuttle up the steep climb. From the ticket office, continue walking along the road for about 1 kilometer to the trail head for the crater.

Getting to Mount Vesuvius with Public Transportation

From the Circumvesuviana Pompei Villa dei Misteri station, take an **EAV bus** to the trail head on Mount Vesuvius, and proceed by foot to the crater rim. From the Circumbesuviana Ercolano station, take the **Vesuvio Express shuttle**.

<u>Bus schedules Pompeii - Vesuvius</u> <u>Visiting the Crater on Mount Vesuvius</u>

Arriving from Rome

You can also visit Pompeii and Herculaneum on a day trip from Rome. From the **Rome Termini** station, take a high-speed train to Naples (Italo or Trenitalia) and then proceed to the underground **Circumvesuviana station** for a train to Pompeii. It takes about 2 hours to get there in total.

Arriving from Capri or the Amalfi Coast

From Capri, the easiest way to reach Pompeii is by taking **the ferry to Sorrento** and booking a tour or day trip to Pompeii with a private driver, or taking the Circumvesuviana train. From the **Amalfi Coast**, you can join a tour from Amalfi or Positano, or book a private tour with a driver. If you want to take public transportation, you will have to take the **Sita bus to Sorrento** and then the train to Pompeii.

Day tours from Naples, Sorrento and Amalfi Coast



FAQ about Pompeii, Herculaneum, and Vesuvius

Pompeii Archaeological Park

How long does it take to tour the ruins at Pompeii?

The ruins of Pompeii cover 44 square hectares, and it would take at least two full days to tour the entire park. Realistically, you can see most of the highlights in 4 hours and longer visits can be very tiring, especially on a hot day. You can also spend a full day exploring the park with a lunch break at one of the picnic areas in the park.

Should I book a guided tour?

We strongly recommend visiting the ruins with a guide, as the park is very large and it can be tricky to find the important sites. In addition, guides can explain interesting details and show you little-known corners of the park that make the experience more engaging and help you understand what daily life was like in the Roman city before the eruption of Mount Vesuvius. A guide will also make sure you make the best use of your time in the park, and don't waste time and energy getting lost!

How can I book a guide?

There are authorized guides at the park entrance who offer two-hour guided tours for about € 11/person. Authorized guides can be recognized by wooden badges worn around their necks. The badges are from the region of Campania and display the region's coat of arms: a white shield with a red diagonal stripe. You can join a group tour, or book a private guide in advance if you are with a small group of family or friends, of if you are particularly interested in an in-depth look at the history of Pompeii.

Can tickets be purchased online? Do I need to book them in advance?

Especially during summer and at the weekends you are likely to face long queues to enter the site. For this reason we recommend buying in advance online tickets to avoid the line. Skip-the-line tickets for Pompeii

Where can I leave my bags?

For security reasons, large bags and backpacks are not allowed inside the park. The maximum size for bags is 30x30x15 cm. There are free baggage checks at the entrance to the ruins. At the Porta Marina Superiore entrance, there is an automated system that prints a receipt with a code to claim your bags when you leave.

Can I visit Pompeii with a small child?

It is hard to get around Pompeii with a stroller or pushchair, so opt for a baby carrier or backpack and leave your stroller at the free bag check. There are Baby Points where you can stop to change or feed your infant in privacy.

Are there special routes for the disabled?

From the Piazza Anfiteatro entrance at Pompeii, you can take the three-kilometer trail specifically for wheelchairs or strollers that includes the amphitheater, gym, and a few houses.

Can I bring my pet inside the park?

Large dogs are not allowed inside the archaeological park, but small dogs on a leash and picked up while inside the homes can be brought inside the park.

Can I have a picnic?

Yes, there are a number of picnic areas inside the park where you can eat a packed lunch or food purchased from the cafeteria near the forum area.

Herculaneum Archaeological Park

How long does it take to visit the ruins at Herculaneum?

To visit Herculaneum, you should consider about half a day. You can see the entire park in about 2 to 3 hours.

Do I need a guide to visit the ruins?

It's always a good idea to book a private guide or join a group tour at the entrance to the park to fully understand the ruins and the history of this ancient city. That said, there is a good audio guide at Herculaneum that is helpful for touring the small park without a guide.

Can I buy tickets online? Is it necessary to buy them in advance?

Herculaneum is smaller and definitely less crowded than Pompeii. However, if you only have a few hours to visit the site, we suggest saving time by purchasing skip-the-line tickets in advance online.

Skip-the-line tickets for Herculaneum

Is there a bag check at the park?

Yes, you can leave your bags at the free bag check at the park entrance.

Can I visit Herculaneum with a small child?

The Roman roads and sidewalks are hard to navigate with a stroller or pushchair, so we recommend using an infant carrier or backpack and leaving your stroller at the free bag check at in the park entrance.

Can I eat inside the park?

No, there are no picnic areas, snack bars or cafès inside Herculaneum. We suggest stopping at one of the restaurants or bars just outside the park for a meal.

Are there special routes for the disabled?

Unfortunately, there are no special routes for the disabled inside the archaeological park, but you can easily navigate the walkway that encircles the ruins with a wheelchair and view the excavated sites from above.

Can I take photos and videos?

You can take photos and videos inside both Pompeii and Herculaneum for private use and without a flash.

Mount Vesuvius National Park

How long does it take to visit Mount Vesuvius?

It takes about three hours to visit Mount Vesuvius, departing on foot from the ticket office, heading up the trail to the crater rim. We suggest putting aside at least half a day, including transportation to the ticket office and the hike. If you combine your visit with a stop at Pompeii or Herculaneum, hike up Mount Vesuvius first thing in the morning and visit the archaeological sites in the afternoon.

Can anyone hike up to the crater rim?

Yes, even children, the elderly, or those with limited mobility. The hike is not recommended for those with serious health issues, however.

When is the best time of year to visit Mount Vesuvius?

The best times are spring and fall. In the winter months, the trail may be closed for inclement weather and in the summer the high temperatures can make the hike up unpleasant.

Are there snack bars along the trail?

There are snack bars at the entrance and along the trail that sell beverages and food at reasonable prices. They also offer restrooms (there are no public restrooms in the park). There are also picnic areas along the trail where you can stop and eat your packed lunch.

What should I wear to hike up Mount Vesuvius?

We suggest comfortable clothing and dressing in layers, sturdy hiking or athletic shoes, sunscreen and a hat. This is especially important in the summer months when temperatures can soar. A walking stick and a windbreaker can also be handy.



Piazza del Plebiscito

A day trip to Naples

Two itineraries to discover the city of Naples.

Naples, the cultural capital of southern Italy, is a sprawling city. It boasts nearly three millennia of history, with architecture influenced by waves of invaders from Spain, France, Rome, Arabia, and Greece. The city has a whopping **8,200 pizzerias** and more than **450 churches** in the historic center. It has a maze of narrow alleys rich in history and folklore, as well as some of the most important museums in Italy. It would be impossible to see all the city's treasures in a single day, so here are **two walking itineraries** to help you discover some of the highlights.

The beginning point for both is **Via Toledo**, a main thoroughfare lined with shops and restaurants running from the royal quarter of Naples to the city's old town. If you are arriving with the **Circumvesuviana train** at the **Napoli Centrale station**, follow the signs for the **Metro Linea 1**, and take it towards **Piscinola**. Get off at the **Toledo station**, considered **one of the most beautiful subway stations in Europe**. If you are arriving by ferry, walk up towards **Piazza Municipio** until you reach La Galleria and the beginning of **Via Toledo**.

From 3 to 6 hours: Royal Naples (V. Toledo, Royal Palace, Castle)

Walk along **Via Toledo** until you arrive at one of the entrances to **Galleria Umberto I**; walk through to reach the **San Carlo Theater**, which connects to the **Naples Royal Palace** with adjoining gardens. From here, there is a nice view of the **Maschio Angioino**, the iconic castle that looms over the city's port (if you arrive in the city through the port, it is part of your first majestic view of the city).



If you want to begin sampling Naples' famous cuisine right away, stop at the "La Sfogliatella Mary" pastry shop at the entrance to the Galleria Umberto I from Via Toledo and order a traditional sfogliatella or babà.

La Sfogliatella Mary +39 081 402218

Piazza del Plebiscito

Now continue to the sweeping **Piazza del Plebiscito**, which stretches across 25,000 square meters and is one of the largest squares in Italy. On one side, the square is lined by the **Royal Palace**, and on the other by **Piazza Trieste e Trento** and the stunning **Church of San Francesco di Paola**. In front of the church, the equestrian statues of the **Bourbon Kings Charles III** and **Ferdinand I** by **Antonio Canova** dominate the square. Traditionally, visitors try to cross this immense space with their eyes covered, passing between these two equestrian statues. If you try too, you'll find it is almost impossible to do.

Where should I have lunch?

There are unlimited street-food options in this area. We recommend la pizza fritta at **Zia Esterina** (on the corner between **Piazza Trieste e Trento** and **Via Nardones**), followed by a gelato from **Mennella** and an espresso from **Gambrinus**.

If you prefer lunch with a sea view, continue along **Via Santa Lucia** to **Via Partenope**. Here, you can stroll through the historic **Borgo Marinaro fishermen's quarter** for a fish and seafood lunch, or stop in one of the waterfront pizzerias. We recommend **Sorbillo Lievito Madre** €/€€ on the corner of **Piazza Vittoria**. From Piazza Vittoria, walk back up **Via Calabritto** to **Piazza dei Martiri**, the elegant heart of the city. From here, continue along **Via Chiaia** back to **Piazza Plebiscito**, where you can take the subway to the train station or return to the port.

From 5 to 8 hours: Old Naples

Piazza del Gesù Nuovo and Chiostro di Santa Chiara.

Walk along **Via Toledo** in the opposite direction of **Piazza del Plebiscito** to **Piazza Dante**, take a look around the square, then double back to **Via Cisterna dell'Olio** and take it to **Piazza del Gesù**. In this square, you will immediately notice the marble "**Guglia dell'Immacolata**" and the lovely facade of the **Chiesa del Gesù Nuovo**, made with a unique decorative diamond-shaped bugnato motif in volcanic rock. Nearby, don't miss the **Santa Chiara Monastery**, an important example of **Neapolitan Gothic architecture** with a beautiful ceramic-tiled cloister.

San Domenico Maggiore and San Severo Chapel

From the **Santa Chiara Monastery**, continue along the Decumano Inferiore (also known as **Spaccanapoli**), the historic Roman road **that divides the city of Naples in two**.



The treasure of San Gennaro



Toledo metro stop



Galleria Umberto I

This is the most vibrant street in the historic center, and just steps from the monastery. Around the corner of **Vico San Domenico Maggiore**, the **San Severo Chapel** is a deconsecrated church that once belonged to the **Principi di San Severo.** It is full of Masonic symbols and known primarily for its artistic masterpieces, including the "**Veiled Christ**" by **Giuseppe Sanmartino**. Be sure to stop here and admire this important monument and its treasures!

A Sweet or Savory Snack

There are a number of traditional "friggitorie" in this neighborhood that prepare freshly fried seafood sold in "cuoppi" paper cones. if you are craving sugar, try a sfogliatella pastry from Scaturchio in Piazza San Domenico Maggiore.

Piazzetta Nilo and San Gregorio Armeno

After visiting the **San Severo Chapel**, go back to **Piazza San Domenico Maggiore** and continue straight to **Piazzetta Nilo**. Here you must stop at **Bar Nilo** and take a snapshot of the display holding a lock of footballer **Maradona's hair**: an almost spiritual experience for fans from Naples and across the globe!

After your espresso break, continue along **San Biagio dei Librai** until you reach one of the most characteristic lanes in Naples, **San Gregorio Armeno**. Turn left and admire its artisinal workshops famous for making traditional **Nativity scenes**. Tiny figurines and **Christmas decorations** that are both holy and whimsical are sold all year long, though around Christmas the lane becomes so crowded that it's hard to walk.

Where to Have Lunch

The end of **Via San Gregorio Armeno** runs into the beginning of **Via dei Tribunali**, where a number of **the most famous pizzerias in Naples** are located. Stop in **Gino Sorbillo** \in / \in \in . for the best pizza in Naples, matched only by the pizza at **Michele a Forcella** \in / \in \in (but note that lines can stretch up to 2 hours). If that's too long to wait, there are a variety of great alternatives, including **Di Matteo** \in / \in \in or **Al Presidente** \in / \in \in . If you would prefer pasta over pizza, sample traditional Neapolitan dishes at the **Trattoria La Campagnola** \in / \in \in .

Via dei Tribunali and Napoli Underground

After lunch, purchase tickets for **Napoli Sotterranea (Naples Underground)**, a tour through a warren of tunnels dug out of the tufo bedrock below the city. It ends with a hidden treasure: the **Greco-Roman theater of Neapolis** dating from the 1st century BC, where the **Emperor Nero** performed with his lyre, accessible only through a trapdoor located in the bedroom of a private home! After your tour, continue walking down **Via dei Tribunali** to **Via Duomo**, where you can visit the **city's cathedral**.

The Duomo

With its blend of **Gothic** elements from the 14th century and Neogothic from the 1800's, the **Cathedral of Santa Maria Assunta** (more commonly known as the **Duomo of Naples**) is the most important religious site in Naples. This is where the phials containing the blood of **the city's patron saint San Gennaro** are carefully guarded. Three times a year, the city's faithful gather to watch as

the blood is miraculously liquified, which is said to be a sign of good fortune for the city. After visiting the Duomo, stop in the adjacent **Museo del Tesoro di San Gennaro**, where gems rivalling those of the **British Crown Jewels** are on display.

Your tour of Naples' treasures ends here: continue along **Via Duomo** towards **Corso Umberto I**, take a snapshot of the famous work by Jorit that depicts **the young San Gennaro** covering an entire wall, and head out of the city along the **"Rettifilo"** (a local nickname for **Corso Umberto I**). Both the central train station and the port are an easy 15-20 minute walk from here.

More info: www.naplesinsider.com



The Veiled Christ

Maschio Angioino Castle



San Gregorio Armeno



Cloister of Santa Chiara



Naples Underground



The Historic Center



The Duomo





The Royal Palace of Caserta

The Royal Palace of Caserta was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site and was the setting for a number of scenes in the Star Wars films.

The **Royal Palace of Caserta** is located in the city of the same name, 30 kilometers north of Naples. Construction of this sumptuous palace began in 1752, when the **Bourbon King Charles III** of Naples commissioned the **architect Vanvitelli** to build a palace larger than the famous French estate in **Versailles**. The architect was up to the challenge, and built the largest 18th-century palace in Europe and the largest royal residence in the world by volume. **The "Reggia"** covers **47,000 square meters**, including **1,200 rooms**, 34 staircases, and three square kilometers of surrounding park and gardens.

Because of the size of the **Royal Palace**, it takes an entire day to tour the palace and its gardens. You can rent individual or tandem bikes to explore the grounds, or opt for a romantic carriage ride. There is also a shuttle bus service inside the estate.

Getting there

From **Sorrento**, you need to take the **Circumvesuviana** (1 hour) to **Naples Central Station**, then transfer to another train for Caserta (40 min.).

Where to Stop for Lunch

For a quick pizza before or after your visit to the Royal Palace, try **Pizzeria I Masanielli** by **Sasà Martucci** \in / \in \in , famous for its "**pizza a canotto**", given the high, soft crust that forms a canoe-shaped pie. For a more gourmet meal, book a table at **Le Colonne di Rosanna Marziale** \in / \in \in , run by a young chef known for dishes highlighting local buffalo mozzarella.

To make the most of your visit, we suggest purchasing tickets online in advance to avoid the long lines at the palace entrance. More info: www.sorrentoinsider.com

The Royal Palace of Caserta

Hours: from 8:30am to 7:30pm

Closed: Tuesdays; 1 January; 25 December

Tickets: €18; Free under 18 Guided Tour & Skip the Line

0823 448 084



Paestum

Paestum, about 70 kilometers south of Sorrento, was founded by ancient Greeks in the 7th century BC and is famous still today for the perfectly preserved Greek temples, which have recently been declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The trip from **Sorrento** to **Paestum** is rather long, so **the best option is to book a private driver for a car tour or rent a car and drive yourself**. To reach **Paestum** by public transportation, you will need to travel to **Naples** and take the train from there; the archaeological ruins are about a 15-minute walk from the train station.

The history of Paestum

The temples at Paestum were built the ancient **Greeks** during the period of the **Magna Grecia**. The city was once called **"Poseidonia"** in honor of the god of the sea. It reached its glory around 500 BC, but by the 4th century BC the area had begun to experience flooding caused by sediment at the mouth of the river **Salso** becoming marshland. Over the centuries, residents gradually left until the city was abandoned completely between 800 and 900 AD. This abandonment was a stroke of luck for the temples, which were left intact over the millenia. They were rediscovered beginning in the 1700s by travellers on the **Grand Tour**, and in 1907 the first archaeological digs began, which lasted into the 1970s.

After entering through the main gate, you will first come upon the "Temple of Ceres", once dedicated to the Goddess of Athens. Continue south, passing the forum, a group of houses, and the amphitheater, all of which offer a view into daily life during Roman times. The Temple of Neptune (or Poseidon in Greek times) is located to the south, and is almost perfectly preserved. The adjacent Temple of Hera once was even transformed into a Catholic basilica. Take time to visit the site's archaeological museum, where the objects unearthed during excavations are displayed, including the famous fresco found in the Tomb of the Diver.

Paestum Archaeological Park

Hours: from 8:30am to 7:30pm. Closed: 1 January, 1 May, 25 December

Tickets: €10

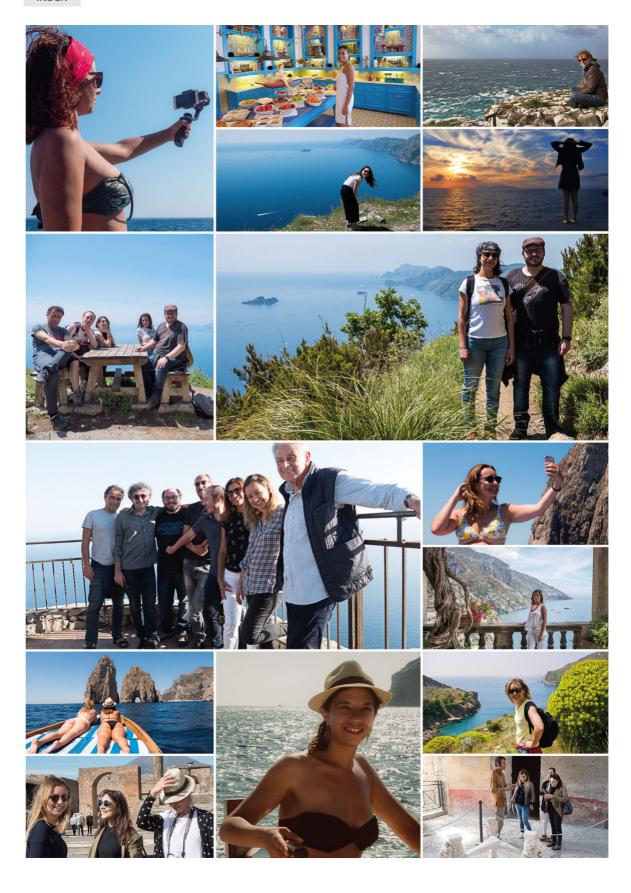
www.museopaestum.beniculturali.it 0828 81 10 23



A gourmet side trip

If you are travelling by car, don't miss the opportunity to stop at one of the many artisan cheesemakers along the road, specialized in making the area's famous **mozzarella di bufala**, or buffalo mozzarella. We suggest visiting Vannulo, which offers tours of the buffalo farm, a farm shop with a variety of artisan cheeses, a farm restaurant featuring dishes based on farm products, and a gelateria specialized in buffalo milk gelato.

Tenuta Vannulo Az. Agricola 0828 724 765





We wanted to end this guide with a few personal snapshots taken while we were personally vetting all the experiences included here.

We hope you have as much fun following these tips as we have had creating them.

We hope to see you soon on the coast!

The Caprionline team

Pompeii - Vesuvius - Herculaneum

ebook edition - March 2025

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