

TOUR OF THE GARDENS AND VILLAS OF THE AMALFI COAST, CAPRI AND ISCHIA

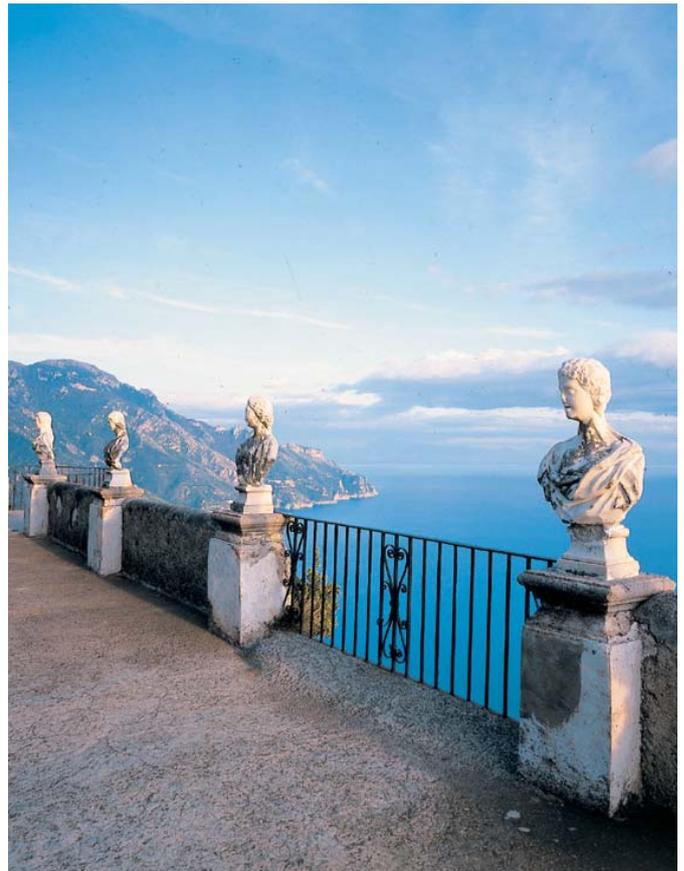
This gardens and villas tour explores a glorious region whose climate is not only suitable for olives, vines, oranges and lemons but also for tender exotics. The region of Campania around Naples is blessed with a rich, fertile and well-drained soil that was appreciated by the Romans. From native plants of Roman times to exotic imports, there is a flourishing huge diversity here to explore. This tour operates with a maximum of 14 people.

THIS TOUR OFFERS a classic introduction to the landscape, history and flora of Campania including the magical islands of Capri and Ischia. You are based on the outskirts of Sorrento and then on the island of Ischia.

In Ravello, perched high above the coast, the remarkable site of Villa Cimbrone boasts a wisteria-clad pergola almost the length of the garden, formal and informal side gardens, a rose garden and trees such as umbrella pines, plane trees and olives that intermingle with palms, cycads, phormiums and yuccas. An air of slight neglect and seemingly wild native euphorbias, scented anemones and giant fennel create a pleasing and relaxed atmosphere. Nearby the gardens of Villa Rufolo extend along three terraces that contain a variety of trees and flowers, from palms and yuccas to oleander and bougainvillea. The palace of Caserta has extraordinary gardens meant to rival Versailles and an English Garden where experimental trees and fruits were grown.

The island of Capri is home to the extraordinarily beautiful villa and gardens created by Axel Munthe will entrance and delight. Sculptures, ancient artefacts, a granite Sphinx, a Greek tomb are to be discovered throughout the gardens, shady pergolas and a profusion of colour as well as stunning panoramas of the island. You are accompanied on a walking tour of the Giardini di Augustus, botanical gardens designed in terraces overlooking the sea full of ornamental plants and flowers.

Finally you cross to the island of Ischia where you visit the private gardens of Ravino, home to succulents and cacti, and then you will treasure a visit to La Mortella, the home and gardens created by Lady Walton, an exotic oasis amongst the maquis where luxuriant plants and trees from around the world co-exist with the indigenous, creating a unique universe with an aromatic fragrance.



Villa Cimbrone



La Mortella, Ischia



Caserta gardens



Villa Rufolo, Ravello



Garden of the Cocumella



Hotel Mezzatorre

DAY BY DAY ITINERARY

Day one: Arrive on the Amalfi Coast

You may choose to fly to Naples between the 06.40 flight from Gatwick arriving at 10.20 or the 15.00 flight arriving at 18.40. You are met and transferred to the hotel. Free time and dinner under your own steam. The hotel has a restaurant and there are numerous others nearby.

Day two: Visit Ravello with Villa Cimbrone and Villa Rufolo

Depart after breakfast for a full day excursion by coach accompanied by a local guide for the spectacular drive along the coast road to spend the day in Ravello and Amalfi. There is plenty of time to explore the delights of the Villa Cimbrone and the Villa Rufolo in Ravello, free time for lunch and then a visit to Amalfi where you stop to visit its Paradise Cloister. You make your own arrangements for dinner, perhaps at the hotel or nearby.

Day three: Visit Capri

Today you are taken to Capri by boat with a guide for a visit first to Anacapri and the extraordinary Villa San Michele, home of Axel Munthe. Enjoy this astonishing collection of ancient artefacts, mosaics and sculptures set amidst splendid vegetation. Then there is free time for lunch before visiting the Giardini di Augustus and a gentle walk to the Punta Tragara from where you can admire the Faraglioni rocks. For those who are fit and able walkers and happy to cope with the steps and uneven surfaces, an optional visit to the amazing site and Roman ruins of Villa Jovis is possible (entrance fees at own cost). Return to your hotel for dinner under your own steam.

Day four: Visit Caserta or Villa Oplontis

Today there will be either a visit to the Royal Palace and gardens at Caserta or a visit to the Roman villa Oplontis where its Roman garden has been authentically restored. It may be that the English Garden at Caserta is still undergoing refurbishment and closed in 2016-2017. Caserta with its green lawns, hornbeam hedges and fountains in the Baroque French style was built to rival Versailles. The gardens are immense and include the English Garden laid out in the 1780s, intended as a complete contrast to the adjacent Baroque garden by Vanvitelli. The English garden was not just a pleasure garden but also allowed for experimental crops and exotic trees and fruits. One of the first camellias in Europe was planted here. Today you can see magnolias, tulip and camphor trees, palms, eucalyptus, ginkgos and yuccas. During your visit here there is time for you to have lunch (own expense) at the

Caffetteria. Return to your hotel for the evening.

Day five: Transfer to Ischia

Leave Sorrento at 9.30 for the direct ferry (50 mins) to Ischia crossing the Bay of Naples. You are transferred to your hotel, the Mezzatorre. In the afternoon you are taken to the gardens of Ravino, a private garden housing a private collection of exotic plants, succulents and cacti, unique in Europe. Spread over an area of about 6000 square metres, you will be able to walk through the gardens along pathways of over 500 metres in an area with abundant plants. The gardens are the result of the passion and care of Giuseppe d'Ambra. Back to the Hotel Mezzatorre to relax and explore. Dinner is included at the hotel.

Day six: Visit of La Mortella

A visit to La Mortella is the highlight of your stay on Ischia. The garden is a 15 minute walk from the hotel but we will arrange a transfer for you. You will have an English speaking guide to give you a tour of the gardens (about 2 hours). La Mortella is Lady Walton's magnificent garden that is an oasis of greenery amid the maquis. The air is humid enough for New Zealand tree ferns and there is a range of rare and tender trees, palms, shrubs and bulbs. The garden offers a parallel existence of indigenous plants (the aroma of the maquis or machia in Italian abounds) as well as the exotics. Charming, fascinating and oozing specimens to delight. The rest of the day is your own before the included dinner at the hotel.

Day seven: Return to London from Naples

Morning at leisure before departing in the afternoon by road and sea back to Naples and on to the airport for the flight leaving at 19.25 arriving back into Gatwick at 21.10 or departing at 21.10 arriving at 22.50.

Dates and prices

This tour departs on the following dates from London for these prices per person.

4 May 2017	£2,280
18 May 2017	£2,450
8 June 2017	£2,530
14 September 2017	£2,530

Prices are based on two people sharing a double or twin room.

Single supplement for use of double: £600 15 Sep 2016, £520 4 May, £650 18 May, £680 8 June and 14 September, per person.

Deposit payment: £300 per person

We include

- Flights with British Airways London Gatwick to Naples in Eurotraveller
- Transportation on the mainland in a luxury small coach with one piece of luggage per person.
- Transportation from Sorrento to Ischia and from Ischia to hotel, back from hotel to Naples.
- Services of a local guide for the excursions and visits as mentioned.
- Entrance tickets to the villas and gardens mentioned
- Four nights' bed and breakfast at the Grand Hotel Cocumella, near Sorrento in a standard double or twin.
- Two nights' dinner, bed and breakfast at the Hotel Mezzatorre, Ischia in a classic double with sea view.

Grand Hotel Cocumella Sant'Agnello, near Sorrento

The 5 star Grand Hotel Cocumella is situated in its own tranquil and beautiful park in Sant'Agnello, just a 20 minute walk from Sorrento's lively centre with its ample choice of tempting shops, bars and restaurants. The atmosphere of the hotel is traditional, historic and elegant and almost no two rooms are alike in size, even if they are in the same category. A pretty terrace overlooks the gardens and here guests can enjoy the buffet breakfast. The Cocumella also has its own man-made beach which is reached by a lift in the gardens; this is exclusively for guests' use, and deckchairs, umbrellas and bathing cabins are provided.

Hotel Mezzatorre Ischia

This is a 5 star luxurious hotel in a splendid location on the coast in Ischia, about 15 minutes' walk from La Mortella. The hotel has a superb spa, a private thermal spring, swimming pool, restaurant and lovely gardens of Mediterranean maquis. From here you can also walk into the nearest town on the coast of Lacco Ameno in about half an hour (or be taken by the hotel's shuttle). The 45 rooms and 12 suites have views of the sea, gardens or park.

Different travel arrangements

If you want us to arrange flights on other dates and from UK regional airports or to extend your holiday with a stay elsewhere in Italy, just let us know. If you are not arriving from the UK, then we can give you a price that excludes flights and perhaps with extra transfers included.

Important information

Please refer to the important information detailed on page 15 of this leaflet.