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Naples



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“A Napoli tre cose sono belle: ‘o mare, ‘o Vesuvio, ‘e sfogliatelle” – that’s what they say. These “Naples’ three beautiful things” (sea, Vesuvius and sfogliatelle) point out in just one sentence the natural wonders of the city, its omnipresent and fascinating enemy, and the city’s culinary marvels. More than that, Naples is said to have been funded by the mermaid Parthenope, and has got its active volcano on one side and, on the other, sulphurous springs and boiling mud pools; between the two, you’ll find artistic, architectural and natural beauties, though it hides more treasures than you can imagine: you’ll discover some of them walking around. These the premises of an interesting trip!

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» NAPLES AT A GLANCE

Neapolitans don't seem to mind the volcano nor the sulphur; they just live with that, simply accepting the danger and thanking mother nature for their wonderful gulf. Taking this as a good philosophy, we would



elect the **Castel dell'Ovo**, on the gulf, as our referring point. It's a castle built on the seaside, like a kind of peninsula, that served as a prison in the past centuries. Naples has a very ancient history – starting from its name, that comes from the Greek *nea polis*, “new town”. The *new* applied to the Magna Grecia times, of course! But today we can deferentially call it *ancient*, after a look at the roads in the historical centre... they've never changed their width since the roman times. Hence the world renowned ability of the Neapolitans on the ‘wheels’ – they have to deal with narrow lanes that did not foresee jeeps nor station wagons. But back to the Castel dell'Ovo, let's have a look around: behind it, the sea. The marvellous

Naples' gulf is right there, and in a sunny and clear day you'll see the **Capri** island on the horizon. But



then, face the other way, and decide: go on the left to enjoy the natural beauties of the city, to the right to see its architectural and artistic side. Let's start with Naples' natural fortune. A 30 minutes walk towards north on the **Caracciolo** seafront, with the sea on your left, will lead you to **Mergellina**, passing through the **Villa Comunale** (Municipal Park), on the other side of the road, which hosts the lungs of the city. There you may have a nice walk through palm trees, eucalyptuses, holm-oaks and other kinds of trees that will make



you forget being in the 3rd biggest Italian city. Keep going (at this point you'd better catch a bus) and you'll get to **Posillipo**; villas, marvellous vegetation and picturesque marinas will be a contour for the breathtaking sight of the gulf and of Naples. From a slight slope that leads you up the hill, you'll enjoy the gulf of Pozzuoli. If you're willing to go a bit further your persistence will be rewarded with the **island of Nisida**. Artificially tied to the dry land by a strip of land, it has a circular shape and a 2 km perimeter; its rounded shape is due to the fact of actually being a volcanic crater. From there you'll feel the master of the gulf. On one side, the **Pozzuoli gulf**, with **Procida** and **Ischia** islands; on the other side, the gulf of Naples, with the **Sorrento** peninsula and **Capri** island on the far side.

But then, let's go back to our starting point. Starting our right side promenade you'll get to **Plebiscito Square** with a 10 minutes walk going up a little bit, with the Vesuvius in front and the sea on your right. Isn't this just perfect? Luckily, the Square has recently become a pedestrian area, so just stand in the middle of it and look around: on the right, the **Palazzo Reale** (Royal Palace), with the statues of the kings looking at you. On the other side, the **San Francesco di Paola Church**, hugging the square with its colonnade. Next to Piazza Plebiscito there's the **Teatro San Carlo**, and

then the **Galleria Umberto I**, an astonishing iron and glass cross-shaped gallery hosting shops and cafés. Going on Via San Carlo you'll get to the so called **Maschio Angioino**, or **Castel Nuovo**, the second Naples' castle we meet out of four.

Back to Piazza Plebiscito, if you walk towards the roundabout and keep going in front of you you'll enter **Via Roma** (which alternates its name



between Via Roma and Via Toledo). It's pedestrian in its first part, and partly runs along the famous **Quartieri Spagnoli** (Spanish area); it will lead you to **Piazza Dante**, where the father of the Italian tongue will look at you, a bit frowned and in a declamatory attitude, from the pedestal he conquered in the middle of the square. Pass him, and on your

right you'll see **Port'Alba**; passing under the gate you'll enter in a very ancient part of the city: the San Gregorio Armeno area. The narrow streets of this zone are a must in the Christmas period, especially **Via San Gregorio Armeno** as the famous Neapolitan cribs have their exploit there. Artistic, minimal, huge and small, they're everywhere along the street. Out of Christmastime, though, you won't get disappointed, looking at the palaces and churches spread over the area. And let's not forget Via San Biagio dei Librai, the last piece of the so called **Spaccanapoli**: it literally means "splitnaples", and that's what it actually does. *Ignoring* houses and palaces, it goes on its way, narrow and straight, forcing its overlooking buildings to make awkward angles to fit the space without daring to invade the obstinate rectitude of this curious street.

In this area, among the other churches, you'll find **Castel Capuano**, the most ancient among Naples' castles and the **Duomo**. Apart from its obvious importance, it's the scene of an annual miracle!! The blood of **San Gennaro**, beloved patron saint of the city, is kept in small bottles inside this church, and is said to melt every year on the 19th of September, anniversary of his death, in May and in December. The fourth Naples' castle is **Castel Sant'Elmo**. It's got a six pointed-star shaped plant, and is situated on

the **Vomero** hill, another green spot of the city. From the height of the hill it overlooks the whole city with its severe appearance.

» TRANSPORTS

Naples is quite well served by a metro with two lines, four funiculars and buses (www.anm.it). The quickest



way is the metro (www.metro.na.it); apart from the obvious speed reason, there's another one not to underrate: the traffic. If you're not in a hurry the buses will give you better sights, of course, and a Neapolitan touch to your movements. You can buy a ticket valid for buses and metro, called **uniconapoli** (www.unicocampania.it), and your choice will be among **biglietto orario** (1 €, valid 90 minutes from the stamping), **biglietto giornaliero** (3 €, valid from 00 am to 12 pm of the stamping day), **biglietto week-end giornaliero** (2.50 €, valid from 00 am to 24 pm of the stamping day, on Saturdays and holidays). These

tickets allow you to ride Naples; to get out in the surrounding areas you have to get the **unicocampania**, choosing the right band in a range from 2 to 11, that covers the whole region (for example, to get to Amalfi, Salerno and Positano you need the band 5).

The **train stations** in Naples are **Stazione Centrale**, directly connected to Piazza Garibaldi metro station, which is just downstairs, and **Mergellina**, which is a metro and train station. The four **funiculars** (www.metro.na.it), that lead you up the hills, are **Centrale**, **Chiaia**, **Mergellina** and **Montesanto**; the unicompania system is valid for them, too.

Being a seaside city, the **boats** need to be counted among the transports. They'll lead you to the islands of Capri, Ischia, Procida, as well as the Amalfi Coast towns and Sicily. Do not miss a daily trip to one of these destinations!! You'll find hydrofoils and ferry boats leaving from **Stazione Marittima** (near Maschio Angioino) and **Mergellina**. The **Metrò del mare** service (www.metrodelmare.com) links Naples to the surrounding area; tickets vary from 2 to 12 €, depending on your destination.

The last means of transport you can try is **taxi**; you'll find them usually in the important spots around the city and near the hotels. They're white (the older ones yellow), and not very expensive, compared to

other big cities, though obviously more expensive than the public transport.

» CLASSICS YOU CAN'T MISS

Naples is a big and intricate city! Though dividing it into areas is was a difficult task, we did it at the best for our first-time visitors:

1. **Plebiscito**
2. **Santa Lucia – Caracciolo seafront**
3. **Mergellina – Posillipo**
4. **Via Roma – Piazza Dante**
5. **San Gregorio Armeno**
6. **Vomero**
7. **Capodimonte**

1. **Plebiscito**. From our starting point, Castel dell'Ovo, either going along the seafront or Via Santa Lucia, you'll find yourself in one of the most beautiful squares of the city: **Piazza Plebiscito**. Half-rounded on your left, with **San Francesco di Paola's Church's** colonnade embracing half



of the square, and straight on the right, with the **Royal Palace**. The

church has been erected in the first half of the XIX century following the Pantheon's model, and keeps inside various statues and paintings. As for the Palace, on its façade you'll see the statues of eight of the most representative among the kings who ruled Naples, for Umberto I will. The palace deserves a visit: to see its beautiful gardens and interiors and the exhibitions it often hosts. (Info: +39 081 58 08 111 or call 848.800.288; open Mon- Sat 9-1.30 and 2.30pm-5pm)

Walk through the square, then, and you'll find the **Teatro San Carlo** (www.teatrosancarlo.it) on the right, built in just 8 months in 1737!! Among its directors we have to remember Rossini and Donizetti. Just next to the theatre there's **Galleria Umberto I**, built in the late



XIX century. It's an iron and glass gallery, surely one of Italy's most impressive; the four arms of its cross plant are filled with shops and cafés, and its central octagonal cupola is more than 50 meters high.

Just behind the Royal Palace you'll find the **Castel Nuovo** (New Castle, so named after its construction to distinguish it from the "old" ones), also known as **Maschio Angioino**. Built in the XIII century, it's a majestic structure and hosts the civic museum and the Communal Counsel's meetings. (Piazza Municipio; ph: +39 081.7955.877; open Mon- Sat).

Get back to Piazza Plebiscito, cross it and walk through **Via Chiaia**, which is itself a lively and pleasant avenue, and you'll get to **Palazzo Cellamare**. Erected in the XVI century, it is famous for having been rented to the Prince of Francavilla (XVIII century), who used to give wonderful parties in it; afterwards, it hosted royal collections and court painters. Next to the palace, between Via Chiaia and Via Filangieri, there's a little church, **Santa Caterina a Chiaia** (late XVI century), which hosts Maria Clotilde Adelaide's tomb, Queen of Sardinia – out of curiosity: she was the sister of three French kings (Louis XVI, Louis XVIII and Charles X), and wife of king Carlo Emanuele IV di Savoia. Walking through Via Filangieri, you'll reach **Via dei Mille**, another lively avenue for a nice walk.



From Piazza Trento e Trieste, the square next to Piazza Plebiscito, you'll find tours for **Napoli Sotterranea** (www.lanapolisotterranea.it, +39 081 40 02 56), *subterranean Naples*. It's a suggestive tour through the undergrounds – a city beneath the city, made of tunnels and used, during the wars, as a refuge.

2. **Santa Lucia - Caracciolo seafront**. The first thing you'll see is **Castel dell'Ovo**, a castle built on a little island, once not connected to the continent. Its name, meaning Egg Castle, is either due to its oval plant or to a legend, that wants a magician to have hidden an enchanted egg in the castle, and on this egg depended its fate. The egg is said to have broken and the castle fell down, but was rebuilt by the Queen Giovanna I, in the XIV century, who put a new egg to protect the castle. **Santa Lucia** is an ancient area around Via Santa Lucia, celebrated by songs and poems, that leads to Piazza Plebiscito. It extends till the Castle's island, that gives way to a view on the southern side of the

gulf, towards Sorrento; moreover, there's a church dedicated to the saint, **Santa Lucia a Mare**, known to be there at least since the IX century.

And then go left from there: a breathtaking walk on **Via Caracciolo** seafront will show you Naples' natural luck: its wonderful gulf, with the Vesuvius on the far left side and Posillipo Hill on the opposite end. Walk towards Posillipo, and you'll have the sea on your left and the gorgeous **Villa Comunale** (Municipal Park) on your right. It starts right after Piazza Vittoria and goes on for more than 1 km, till Piazza della Repubblica. Walk, sit on its benches, or run through it, anyway you'll enjoy its tropical plants, artistic fountains and the busts dedicated to illustrious citizens. Inside the park there's the **Stazione Zoologica and Aquarium** (www.szn.it). This research centre supports studies on marine fauna and flora furnishing boats and technical equipment, and publishes scientific reviews. The interesting part for the public, though, is the aquarium, the most ancient in Europe, ideated to host the marine species living in the Gulf of Naples.

3. **Mergellina - Posillipo**. After a long and relaxing walk on the seafront, you'll get to the Mergellina area; it's got a little port, porto Sannazaro, and some palaces and churches you'll be glad to see. **Santa Maria del Parto** is a



little church, with an inferior and a superior part; the superior one will give you a beautiful sight on the sea. **Sant'Antonio a Posillipo** is up the hill; the **Rampa di Sant'Antonio** (Saint Anthony's flight), a zigzagging little road, will lead you up there from the **Santa Maria di Piedigrotta Church**, popular and ancient (XIII century; rebuilt in late XVI century and recently restored). Piedigrotta and Fuorigrotta ("at the foot of the grotto" and "out of the grotto") are two areas so called because they're on the two sides of a tunnel that connects Naples and Pozzuoli.

But let's not lose our way; back to the end of Via Caracciolo, where it changes into Via Posillipo, you'll see **Palazzo Donn'Anna**. It was built in the XVII century for donna Anna Carafa, but left unfinished, thus assuming the charm of an ancient ruin right from the start.

Carrying on your walk through **Via Posillipo** – or taking a bus – you'll enjoy beautiful views on the gulf in a chic and quiet part of the city, that will end in the **island of Nisida** and,

after, **Pozzuoli**, known for its boiling mud pools.

4. **Via Roma – Piazza Dante. Via Roma**, also known as **Via Toledo**, is a shopping avenue (pedestrian till Via Diaz) that starts in front of Piazza Plebiscito. Walking from Piazza Plebiscito, on your left you'll have the famous **Quartieri Spagnoli** (Spanish area). Its origin dates back to the XVI century, and its reticulated shape is due to the fact that it was, originally, a Spanish military camp, wanted by Don Pedro de Toledo, where the soldiers just decided to stay. Nowadays this area is very picturesque, but you will need to give more attention to your belongings, especially at night in the little lanes.

Walk through Via Roma, and you'll end up in **Piazza Dante**. Behind the declaiming poet there's the entrance to the **Convitto nazionale Vittorio Emanuele II**, and on the left, **Port'Alba**. It's an ancient city gate, erected in 1625; passing through it you'll find many bookstalls selling new and old school books and you will enter the ancient part of the city.

After Piazza Dante you'll find yourself in front of the **Museo Archeologico Nazionale** (www.marketplace.it/museo.nazionale, +39 081 44 01 66; 9am-8pm, closed on Tuesdays), where you'll be able to visit its various sections – Egypt, numismatic, sculpture, mosaic, paintings and temporary

exhibitions.

5. **San Gregorio Armeno.** *T'accumpagno vico vico sulo a tte ca si' 'n amico e te porto pe' 'e quartiere addo' 'o sole nun se vede. Ma se vede tutto 'o riesto e s'arapeno 'e ffeneste e capisce comm' e' bella 'a citta' 'e Pulecenella* – "I'll take you

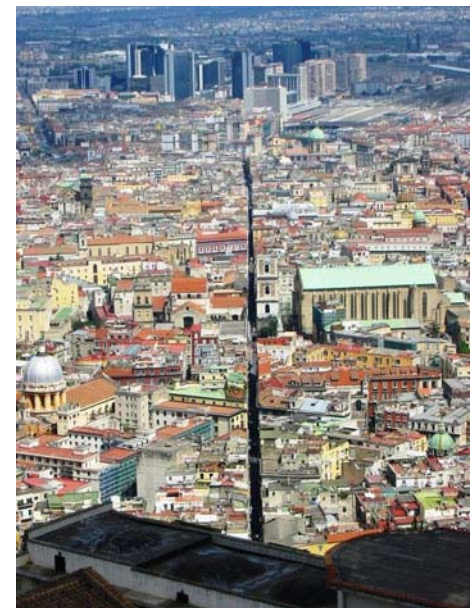


from lane to lane, just you because you're a friend, and I'll take you through the neighbourhoods, where you can't see the sun. But you can see all the rest, and the windows open, and you understand how beautiful is the city of Pulcinella".

No better way than a famous neapolitan song to introduce the ancient part of the city. Passing Port'Alba is like leaving the modern world behind you, entering an old and

fascinating one. Ancient buildings, narrow streets and a picturesque atmosphere is what you'll get; the principal things to be seen (begging pardon to the others) are the **Duomo**, **Cappella Sansevero**, **Gesù Nuovo**, **Spaccanapoli**, **Via San Gregorio Armeno** and church, **Basilica di Santa Chiara**, **Castel Capuano**. Quite a lot!... but still a hint to all you can see.

Let's start from **Gesù Nuovo** and the **Basilica di Santa Chiara**. They're one in front of the other, taking the right from Via Port'Alba. **Chiesa del Gesù Nuovo** hosts many painting and statues and was built in XVI century, whilst the **Basilica di Santa Chiara** (www.santachiara.info, +39 081 79 71 256) in XIV century for Queen Sancia's will; she felt



inclined to the seclusion life, but her role didn't allow her to do so, and she decided to show her devotion to the religious life she longed for with this majestic complex, that includes Basilica, Monastery, Museum and Cloister.

By the way, the street between these two churches is the so called **Spaccanapoli**, that goes straight for some kilometres assuming different names (Via Pasquale Scura, Benedetto Croce, San Biagio del Librai, Vicaria Vecchia), obliging the palaces to be cut in strange ways not to disturb its way. Narrow and absolutely straight, it's very lively – and very curious to be seen from the higher parts of the city. Through the narrow streets of this area you'll find the **Cappella Sansevero** (www.museosansevero.it; ph: +39 081 55 18 460. Working days: 10am-5.40pm; festivities: 10am-1.10pm. Closed on Tuesdays. 6€), which deserves a visit to see its statues and its renown **Cristo Velato**, an astonishing statue representing a veiled Christ.



Back to Spaccanapoli, go on a bit more and you'll have **Via San Gregorio Armeno** on your left. Heart of Naples' craftsmanship, it's a must in the Christmas period to see the famous Neapolitan cribs, sold and shown off all along the road. If it's not Christmas, the street keeps lively anyway: you'll find stalls selling silk and paper flowers. **San Gregorio Armeno Church**, funded in X century, is rich in artworks, from the wooden ceiling to its marvellous frescoes and paintings.

Go till the end of the road and turn right; you'll be in Via dei Tribunali, and on the left you'll find the **Duomo**. Finally, you're in **San Gennaro's** church; inside there's **Real Cappella del Tesoro di San Gennaro**, the Royal Chapel of the



Saint's treasure. This is where, together with other relics, a small bottle with what believers say to be the Saint's blood (or whatever it is – actually, nobody knows if it really is his blood) is kept. Believe that it is or not, anyway it melts,

and it does three times a year at least since the XIV century (the saint died in the IV century, but the "miracle of San Gennaro" is not mentioned before 1000 years after his death); here are the dates: the first Saturday of May, on the Saint's day (19th September) and on the 16th December. Actually, the miracle is more than just melting: the blood melts just if no catastrophes are to be expected during the year; otherwise, the miracle doesn't happen, and the city is warned (like in 1944, when the Vesuvius erupted, or in 1980, when Naples was hit by a catastrophic earthquake). Miracle or chemical prodigy, this is one of the big happenings of the city, and finding yourself there in that period will be an experience! No doubt! Another curiosity: the Saint has been decapitated; the stone on which his head is said to have been cut is in a church in Pozzuoli, and the bloodstains on it melt as well. Next to the Duomo, there's the entrance to the **Museum of the Treasure of San Gennaro** (9am-6.30pm), with a collection of historical religious items and precious artworks.

After dreaming or being cynical about this, let's see another of Naples' castles: **Castel Capuano**. It's the most ancient of the city dating back to XII century; its appearance varied several times, and its function too, from royal to justice palace, being the scene of historical intrigues and receiving illustrious guests along

the centuries.

6. **Vomero**. It's one of Naples' hills, and there are two things you'll absolutely have to see there: **Castel Sant'Elmo** and the **Certosa di San Martino**.

The **Certosa di San Martino**, (S. Martin's Carthusian Monastery: 8.30am-7.30pm, closed on Wednesdays; 6 €), is up the Vomero hill. It was built in the XIV century and consecrated some decades after. The Carthusian monks have been expelled, charged of Jacobinism and reaccepted various times, but their definitive expulsion dates back to 1866.

With **Castel Sant'Elmo** (8.30am-7.30pm, closed on Wednesdays; 1 €, but depending on current exhibitions, and free if you already have a ticket to the Certosa) you'll finally see the last of Naples' castles. It was built where once was a church dedicated to S. Erasmus, hence the name, transformed into "Elmo". High on the hill, next to the Certosa, it towers the city and gives you a breathtaking view. With its six pointed star-shaped plant it proudly stands up the hill since the XIV century, and nowadays hosts exhibitions and public events.

7. **Capodimonte**. One more hill, one more palace. Capodimonte hosts the **Royal Palace** (8.30am-7.30pm, closed on Wednesdays; 7.50 €) a museum and a park. Built at the end of the XVIII, its national museum hosts nowadays a huge variety



of collections of precious objects, paintings, antiquities and more. Just to give you a hint of what you'll see inside, one of its famous attractions is the *Salottino di Porcellana* (the Porcelain living-room) where more than 3000 hand-painted porcelain pieces coming from all Europe are kept, showing the wonders of the famous **Capodimonte porcelain** obtained with an ancient and elaborated technique. As for the park, it's huge and marvellous, with a variety of trees – but mostly holm-oaks, pines and lime trees. Inside the park you'll find the **stables**, the **Princes Villa** and the **Cappella di San Gennaro**.

Going down the hill you'll get to the **Osservatorio Astronomico** (www.na.astro.it; call for visits; ph: +39 081 55 75 429), built in 1819. It's the most ancient European observatory, and is used for positional astronomy, solar physic and theoretical astrophysics. The

historical museum inside will show you a rare collection of scientific instruments.

» ONE DAY TRIPS

Enough with city, palaces and churches. Now you deserve some sea! Here are some one-day-trips that will restore you after your tourist efforts!

1. **Capri**
2. **Ischia**
3. **Procida**
4. **Pozzuoli**
5. **Sorrento**
6. **Amalfi Coast**
7. **Pompei**
8. **Caserta**

1. **Capri**. The most famous among the islands of the gulf, it certainly deserves a visit! Since the Roman times it's been a longed destination, as you can see from the ancient villas, among which you can visit **Villa Jovis**, built for Tiberius (the Roman Emperor). Arriving in Capri you'll see **Marina Grande**, the



northern port; on the opposite side there's **Marina Piccola**, from where you'll see the famous **Faraglioni**. Nearby, there's the town of **Capri**, the biggest of the island, the most popular part of which is surely the **Piazzetta**. Going on the west side you'll find **Anacapri**, the other municipal district of the island. Enjoy the brief trip to get there, on a road surrounded by spontaneous aromatic plants on its sides, tortuously going up the island range. In Anacapri you'll find another Roman villa, **Villa Gradola**; but the most astonishing thing of all is the **Grotta Azzurra** (www.capri.it/en/grotta-azzurra). Literally, a *blue grotto*: you can get there from



Anacapri or directly from Capri, by boat. Once there, you'll have to catch one of the little pair oars organized to let you see this natural wonder: the water is so blue, and yet so transparent that you'll feel as if there's no water at all beneath the boat. But as we promised, you'll find nice beaches to lie in the sun and

get a tan and nice baths!

2. **Ischia**. It's the biggest island of the gulf and is divided in various towns. The places you have to see before splashing in the sea water are the **Castello Aragonese**, on a north-eastern appendix of the island connected to the main island by a medieval stone bridge, built by a Syracuse tyrant in 474 B.C. Then visit the **Giardini La Mortella**, that include a museum dedicated to their original owner, the English composer Sir William Walton. In



the garden you'll find beautiful tropical and Mediterranean plants, and you'll enjoy a beautiful sight on the city and port. The **Torre di**

Guevara, built in the XV century by Guevara, a Spanish cavalier, offers a beautiful sight, other than interesting exhibitions. It is also called Torre Michelangelo, because Michelangelo Buonarroti is said to have stayed there living an illicit love! But now, beach time!

3. **Procida**. An irregular and funny shape characterizes this little island, made of just one district but still worth a visit. You'll arrive in the port of **Marina di Sanzio Cattolico**, or Marina Grande, that will welcome you with its houses of different gaudy colours and citrus trees behind; bright coloured houses are characteristic of sailors towns, because they let the returning sailors individuate their house at a glance, from the sea. Relax and walk about, look around and enjoy!

4. **Pozzuoli**, the **sofataras**. Here you'll really feel you're next to an active volcano – but no need to panic: it's ordinary routine, they just puff away some sulphurous vapours. Moreover: here the **bradyseism phenomenon** is constant, making the whole area go up or down, depending on the volcano's activity, some centimetres per year. Apart from these natural characteristics and the gorgeous sights you'll have from there, you can visit the **San Gennaro church** with the rock where the famous saint was decapitated and whose blood stains follow the melting of the blood kept in the Duomo of Naples. Then, the

Anfiteatro Flavio: built in Nero's time, it's the 3rd in Italy for size, containing up to 20.000 spectators, and the **Macellum**, or **Temple of Serapide**, because of the statue dedicated to the god Serapide. Apart from its historical interest, it's a visible example of the bradyseism of the area, carrying signs of its former partial immersion in the sea water.

5. **Sorrento**. The Sorrento peninsula is the southern limit of the gulf of Naples. Have a walk in the **Villa Comunale**, the park on the



coast, and then visit the **Chiostro di San Francesco**. The Cloister is nicely decorated with plants

and flowers, and is the suggestive scene of concerts and exhibitions. Another interesting visit is the **Sedil Dominova**, a XV century building decorated with frescoes of the renaissance period. The nearby towns, like Massa Lubrense and Punta Lagno, for example, are little jewels to be seen even just to enjoy the scenery.

6. **Amalfi Coast**. The world-renowned Amalfi Coast is beautiful to be seen both from land and sea, and certainly deserves all its fame. With its Saracens turrets it reminds us the Moorish dominion in the area, and its beaches on the Tyrrhenian sea are just made to relax and let us admire the coast with a lazy swim or a ride on a boat. Sprinkled with little towns connected one to the other by tortuous – and beautiful – roads, the ones you absolutely have to see are **Positano** (and its famous Cupola), **Amalfi** (and its dome) and **Ravello**. The first two are right on the coast and will offer you, apart from a nice



centre, wonderful beaches, while **Ravello** is a bit on the interior.

7. **Pompeii**. It doesn't need any

introduction, and would deserve a special attention. Obviously a must for its historical importance! In two words? It's a perfectly conserved Roman town thanks to the volcano ash that submerged it after the Vesuvius eruption on the 29th August 79 B.C.

Since its beauties absolutely deserve more than a page each we just suggest not to miss a visit!



The **Apollo and Jupiter' Temples**, the **Villa dei Misteri**, the **brothel**, the famous **rosso pompeiano** (a reddish colour used in many frescoes and still inexplicably bright after 2000 years!) and all the rest! A curiosity: Pompeian men didn't want the others (that is, their wives!) to know when they were going to the brothel, so there weren't explicit indications to it. But if you pay attention walking around you'll see, on the walls of some buildings and even on the road stones, camouflaged phallic indications that lead to the *lupanare*.

8. **Caserta**. Just 40 km from Naples, it attracts people from everywhere

for the **Reggia di Caserta** (www.reggiadicaserta.org, +39 0823 44 80 84; visit to the apartments: 8.30 am-7.30pm; gardens: 8.30 am-afternoon, depending on the month. Whole ticket: 6 €; just apartments: 4.20 €; just park: 2 €; to enter the park with your own bike: ticket + 1 €). It's a huge Royal Palace! Its luxurious apartments as well as its enormous park are absolutely a must: you'll see elegant and rich rooms, proudly decorated with "truly faked marbles", as the guides sometimes point out, but real abundance of precious things all over the palace. Then, the park: the Italian one, the English one, the fountains... a jewel, in its whole.

» SHOPPING AND FLEA MARKETS

The principal shopping avenues are **Via dei Mille** area and **Via Roma**. The first – including Via Filangieri, Piazza dei Martiri, Riviera di Chiaia and surroundings – is an elegant avenue, with shops that make wallets cry; you'll easily reach it getting off at the Piazza Amedeo metro stop. In Riviera di Chiaia you'll find **Marinella** a famous historical boutique specialized in ties. **Via Roma** is a more accessible one. Pedestrian in its first half, it starts right after Piazza Plebiscito, and between a clothing shop and a café it will free you from Naples' traffic jams for a while. But then, let's go for some

flea markets: the most known are **Forcella**, between Piazza Garibaldi (central railway station) and Corso Umberto I, everyday from 9am to noon; you'll find lots of things, but keep your eyes particularly open!! **Fuorigrotta**, every working day in the morning (8am-1pm); it's in front of Fuorigrotta cumana station, and you'll find every sort of things, from food to shoes. In Via Giordano Bruno, Mergellina area, there's the **Torretta** market, a closed and



picturesque market. Near the main station there's **Porta Nolana**, the fish market; every morning at dawn the **Mercato dei Fiori**, at the Maschio Angioino. And, to finish, the **Antique Market** at the Municipal Park, every 3rd and 4th Saturdays and Sundays of each month.

» EAT & DRINK

A Neapolitan song goes "a nuje ce piace e' magnà" – *we like to eat*. I'll bet! *Pizza, muzzarella, pizzelle fritte, spaghetti c'a pummarola, pasticcio 'e Carnevale, frittat'e pasta, scarola a us'e Natale, pizz'e scarola, pizza coperta, impepat'e cozze, fritto misto, frittura all'italiana, casatiello, tortano, parmiggian'e melenzane, friarielli, pastiera, struffoli, sfugliatelle, babà*, all accompanied with a nice Lacryma Christi or a Vesuvio, white or red, and, to finish, a good *café*, obviously espresso, and a *lemuniello* or a *mandarinetto*. Some are world renowned dishes, others are less known, but they're all yummy. Neapolitan cuisine is incredibly varied, and as its ingredients are surprisingly poor. **Pizza**? Who doesn't know it? And still, it's just flour with water and brewer's yeast, with tomato and mozzarella on the top. Naples is its birth-city. Try it there and you'll understand you had never eaten it before. And absolutely try **mozzarella** by itself, as well – delicate and yet tasty. **Pizzelle fritte**, or **montanare**, are a variation on the pizza theme: tiny and fried pieces of pizza dough, with a nice and well dressed tomato sauce and parmesan cheese on the top. Then, the famous **spaghetti al pomodoro**, a deliciously simple example of the art of making pasta, followed by more complicated ways of cooking it, like the **pasticcio di Carnevale**: pasta in the oven

with tomato sauce, ricotta and mozzarella cheese, tiny meatballs and, sometimes, sausage and boiled eggs. If some pasta is left, don't even think to throw it away: Naples' **frittata di pasta** will serve it as a kind of yummy tortilla, blending the leftover pasta with eggs, and finally eating it in slices like a pie. Christmas time: **scarola a us'e Natale**, Christmas escarole made with raisins, pine seeds, black olives and a bit of anchovy, which can also be used to fill a **pizza di scarola**, a pie made with pizza dough and filled with Christmas escarole. It's more generally called **pizza coperta**, and you'll find it filled with lots of different ingredients.



Fancy some **fish dishes**? Then an **impepata di cozze** will be perfect: mussels simply cooked with olive oil, garlic and pepper. Or a **fritto misto**, including squid rings and little fried fishes; since Naples is the city of fried dishes, try the **frittura all'italiana**, a variety of little fried pieces of vegetables. And then,

tòrtano: a ring-shaped roll of dough filled with salami and eggs. For Easter, try the **casatiello**: a ring-shaped salty cake with salami inside and whole eggs on the top.

Aubergines are very used in Naples cuisine: can be fried, grilled, and eaten as a vegetable *contorno* or else fried and then in the oven with tomato, parmesan cheese and mozzarella, making a **parmigiana di melanzane**. Another very characteristic vegetable in Neapolitan cuisine are the **friarielli**, a kind of tiny broccoli whose name (sounds like *nice fried things*) reminds us that their tasty flavour is due to the fact that they're not boiled, but cooked with olive oil, garlic, salt and chilli.

Dessert time: during the Easter time don't miss the **pastiera**, the Easter cake. Originally, it was made with the pasta left; now with soaked corn and ricotta cheese, and an equilibrium of aromas – the most characteristic of which is the orange flowers essence – that make anyone's mouth water. In the Christmas period, though, **struffoli** are a must. Tiny fried rounded pieces of a pastry made



wonderfully tasty by the mixture of honey, sugar and water poured on them. And then, the famous and ever present **sfogliatelle**: you'll get to choose between a *riccia* or a *frolla*, different dough, but same



filling – sugared semolina and candied fruit. And finally, **babà**, a delicate risen pastry.

Another Naples' wonder is **coffee**, an art in the Vesuvius city. As for



wines, go for a **Lacryma Chisti** or a **Vesuvio**, both can be red or white, and, as for liquors, the king is called **limoncello**, made with the wonderful lemons of the area, but

the **mandarinetto** will be a good try as well.

We're ready for some real tasting; to begin with, on the street you'll find many *friggitorie*, street take away shops selling fried food, cheap and good for a fast meal.

As for the pizza, you won't have difficulties to find a pizzeria anywhere paying just a few euros, but here are four: **Brandi** (www.brandi.it, Salita S. Anna a Palazzo 1-2, corner Via Chiaia; ph: +39 081 41 69 28) was funded in 1780; you'll find a variety of pizzas and other things to nibble while waiting. **Sorbillo** (www.accademiadellapizza.it, Via dei

Tribunali, 32; ph: +39 081 44 66 43) isn't as old, it was funded in 1932. Apart from the marvellous Pizza you can eat there, it's known because Luigi Sorbillo, the founder, had 21 sons, all *pizzaioli*. Then, **Michele** (www.damichele.net, Via Cesare Sersale, 1/3, near Corso Umberto I; ph: +39 081 55 39 204): another very known pizzeria funded in 1870, where the only pizzas you'll get to choose are Margherita (tomato and mozzarella) and Marinara (tomato and garlic). It's not to be considered as a deprivation, but rather as a hymn to the two Pizza Queens, to which two poems are dedicated, written in dialect by two Neapolitan poets and hanging on the pizzeria's walls. Finally, **Mattozzi** (Via Filangieri, 16; ph: +39 081 41 63 78): good pizza and a wide range of typical entrées and dishes.

Not only pizza: **Zi' Teresa** (www.ziteresa.com, Borgo Marinaro, 1; ph: +39 081 76 42 565), on Castel dell'Ovo area, will serve you delicious dishes, especially fish and pasta; wonderful position, but a bit expensive. This is the most famous of the area, though you'll find other cheaper and good restaurants there.

Fundamental confectioner's shops: **Gay-Odin** (www.gayodin.it, it's got various shops in the city, in Via Toledo, Via Cervantes and others), famous for its *cioccolato foresta* and all its fine chocolates, filled chocolates, chocolate liquor and much more – is your mouth already watering? We've just started. Let's go for a *babà* at **Agrillo's** (Via Giordano Bruno, 81, Mergellina area) or at **Scaturchio's** shop (www.scaturchio.it, Piazza San Domenico Maggiore, 19; ph: +39 081 55 16 944), in the historical centre; then stop at **Pintauro's** shop (Via Toledo, 275), the most traditional place to taste the Neapolitan *sfogliatella*. After that, ask for a coffee at the **Caffè del Professore** (central seat in Piazza Trieste e Trento, next to Plebiscito; ph: +39 081 40 30 41), either classic or with a hazelnut cream; just next to the Caffè del Professore you'll see **Gambrinus** (www.caffegambrinus.com, Via Chiaia 1-2; ph: +39 081 41 75 82), a historical and very elegant café. **Moccia** (Via San Pasquale, 24) is another must among the

confectioners shops, with yummy things for your breakfast to give your day a good start, and then... ice-cream time! At the **Chalet Ciro a Mergellina** (www.chaletciro.it, Via Caracciolo; ph: +39 081 66 99 28) you'll find good ice-creams and, moreover, soft yummy brioches to be filled with the ice-cream flavours you prefer, not to mention the sight on the gulf.

» NIGHTLIFE

After a good dinner you'll be ready to go out – time for fun! The most lively areas are the **Chiaia** surroundings and **Piazza Bellini**, after Port'Alba, continuing in the Spaccanapoli area in the historical centre, though you'll find nice spots hidden a bit everywhere. Chiaia will fascinate you with its seafront position, so dive into its tiny lanes and choose your favourite place to have an *aperitivo* (the typical Italian cocktail before dinner, different for every region but unflinching everywhere), or to hang out at night. To mention one, the **Enoteca Belledonne** (Vico Belledonne a Chiaia, 18; ph +39 081 40 31 62) will welcome you among all the people of the area, who pop out for a drink.

In Piazza Bellini, among the others, there's an interesting spot: **Intramoenia** (www.intramoenia.it, Piazza Bellini, 70; ph: +39 081 29 09 88), meaning *inside the city gates*; it's a literary bar, with a role in

the city cultural life. Curious at least for its name, **Aret'a palm** (Piazza Santa Maria la Nova, Spaccanapoli), Neapolitan for “behind the palm tree”, though the name seems to be the most Neapolitan thing in it. The best you can do is walking around Chiaia or Spaccanapoli, where you'll find Neapolitan young people; if you're in a stylish mood Mergellina and the Via dei Mille area will do.

As for **theatres**, the **San Carlo** is obviously the most classic, with its opera and theatre pieces, but it's not the only one: **Teatro Bellini** (www.teatrobellini.it, Via Conte di Ruvo 14; ph: +39 081 54 91 266), between Piazza Dante and the Museo Nazionale, is a beautiful palace performing theatre pieces, as well as the **Teatro Augusteo** (www.teatroaugusteo.it, beginning of Via Roma; ph: +39 081 41 42 43).

Cinemas: you'll find many, big and small, throughout the city. Here are a few to get you started: **Cinema Filangieri** (Via Filangieri, 43/47; ph: +39 081 25 12 408), **Cinema Spalti Maschio Angioino** (Piazza Municipio; ph: +39 081 42 06 173), **Warner Village** (Via Chiaia, 149; ph: +39 081 42 90 82 25).

» INTERNET CAFÉS

Here we go with some internet points: at **Cafè Cool** (C.ta Trinità Maggiore, 4; ph: +39 081 42 01 632) you'll have at your disposal computers in a trendy lounge in the



historical centre – but you'll pay for it... The **Caffè “in”** (www.caffein.it, Via Nicolò Garzilli, 41; ph: +39 081 76 73 581) is cheaper, and serves good cafés and nice food as well. If you're looking for an internet point with no cafés nor snacks, then the **Internet train** (www.internettrain.it, Via Montesanto, 60; ph: +39 081 19 56 02 05) will offer you a pc position at a standard price.

» CITY EVENTS

Naples is a very religious city. Many events are related to religion, but frequently they're actually transformed into a party, with fireworks and all – Neapolitans are very known for their love for fireworks...

MAY: Let's start saying that **San Gennaro** in one of the most felt celebrations in Naples. The saint's blood melts three times a year, one of which is on the 1st Saturday of May.

In this month museums' entrances are free and city tours are organized

to promote its beauty – take advantage of it!

JUNE: International artists will jazz around Naples' province during the whole summer with the **Jazz Circuit!**

JULY: **Neapolis Festival** – Enjoy two days of rock concerts in front of the Teatro San Carlo! And, on the 15th and 16th, join the celebrations for the **Madonna del Carmine**: the burning of the church tower is an astonishing show performed with skilfully placed fireworks on the 15th, and the 16th is for the masses: 12, one per hour from 7am to 7pm, to let all the pilgrims attend to the celebration.



SEPTEMBER: From the 5th to the 12th there's the **Madonna di Piedigrotta**, with a boat parade from Mergellina port. The statue of the Lady is brought out of her church once every 50 years.

16th is **San Gennaro** – the blood melts again, and it's a huge celebration. And then... **Pizzafest!** Cabaret, concerts and pizza for everyone!

DECEMBER: On the 16th **San**

Gennaro's blood melts for the last time of the year, and *Christmas in Naples* starts early: throughout the month you'll find Christmas concerts, street markets, theatre performances that will cheer you up while waiting for Santa. To finish the year, the *New Year's Eve* in Naples is something you can't miss: incredible fireworks, music, concerts, dance and much more, in every corner of the city but with a central meeting place in Piazza Plebiscito – have fun



FAMOUS PEOPLE FROM NAPLES

Torquato Tasso, poet, 1544 – 1595

Antonio Griffò Focas Flavio Angelo Ducas Comneno De Curtis di Bisanzio Gagliardi (Totò for his friends!): actor, composer, 1898 – 1967

Eduardo De Filippo, actor, director, 1900 – 1984

Sofia Villani Scicolone (Sophia Loren), actress, 1934

Carmine and Giuseppe Abbagnale (fratelli Abbagnale), rowing Olympic champions; Carmine 1962, Giuseppe 1959

Agostino Abbagnale, rowing Olympic champion, 1966

Fabio Cannavaro, football world champion, 1973



» USEFUL NUMBERS

Here are some numbers you might need:

Carabinieri: 112

Police: 113

Service for stolen cars:

+39 081 79 41 435

Local Police: +39 081 75 13 177

Fire brigade: 115

Medical emergency: 118

Tourism Office: Piazza del Gesù, open 9am-6pm every day: +39 081 55 12 701

Taxi - Radio Napoli

+39 081 55 64 444;

Radio Partenope

+39 081 55 60 202;

CO.TA.NA. +39 081 57 07 070

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