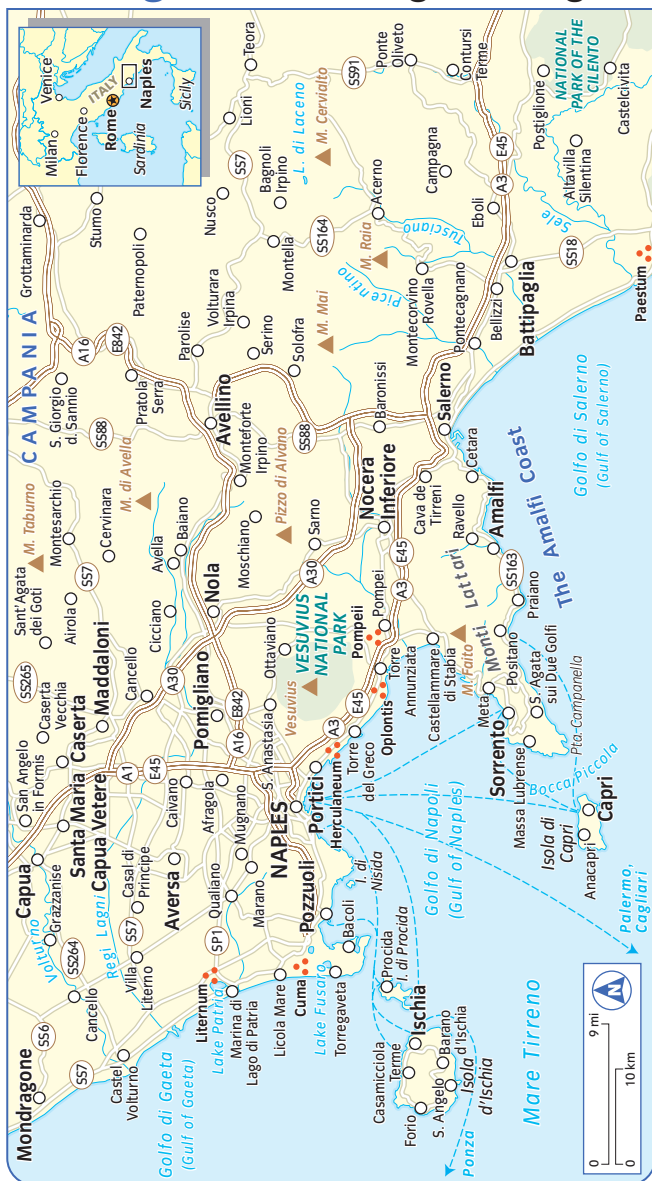


# 1

## **Strategies** for Seeing the Region



# Strategies for Seeing the Region



Previous page: Capo Miseno, Campi Flegrei.

**T**here's a lot to see in this book: one of Italy's biggest cities full of extraordinary art treasures, a spectacular coastal drive, the many marvels of the ancient world, and mainland Europe's only active volcano. And I haven't even mentioned food, wine, lazing on the beach, or simply gazing at the scenery. Here are some suggestions for making the most of your time in Campania.



*Al fresco lunch overlooking Borgo Marinari.*

### **Rule #1: Don't push yourself too hard**

Remember that you're on holiday and to go home a burnt-out wreck would defeat the object of the exercise. Naples is an invigorating but tiring city that's big, noisy, chaotic, and (in the summer) hot. So pick and choose what interests you most from Chapter 2, the 'Best of Naples'; don't try and fit too much into one day and leave plenty of time for breaks. The out-of-town tours are less stressful in that they involve smaller, quieter places, but these too get very crowded in the summer and traffic can be a nightmare. In short, don't take on too much.

### **Rule #2: Distances are short, but roads are slow**

Apart from Paestum, which is around 100km (62 miles) south of Naples, all the places featured in this guide are quite close together. However, bear

in mind that the roads around the Sorrentine Peninsula and along the Amalfi Coast are narrow and, in the summer, clogged with traffic, so progress may be slow. The distances on Ischia and Procida are tiny, but again, the roads are often busy in high season. On Capri, you have to rely on your feet to get around, and so allow plenty of time.

### **Rule #3: Consider your method of transport carefully**

Traveling by road in these parts can be slow going. If you're planning to stick to the towns, consider the train, boat, or a combination of the two. What could be more romantic than arriving in Positano at sunset and alighting on the beach? And what could be more infuriating than sitting at a virtual standstill several kilometers outside the town while you wait for two huge tour buses to squeeze past each other?



*Procida's bustling port of Marina Grande.*

#### **Rule #4: Decide where to base yourself and whether to hotel-hop or stay in one place**

Some people like to be based in one place and tour from there; others prefer an itinerant tour with a different hotel every night. Weigh up having to check in and check out, unpack and re-pack, each day against having to travel a little farther to see different places. If you plan carefully, you should be able to avoid too many hours in transit.

#### **Rule #5: Take plenty of time for delicious meals**

For me, mealtimes are an essential part of any vacation. I love food and find that the variation in food and food culture between regions is fascinating. *Mangiare* (eating) is very important in Italy, and nowhere more so than in Campania where the variety and quality of what's on offer is exceptional. A great meal needn't be expensive. Indeed, one of my most memorable gastronomic experiences while researching this guide involved a plate of deep-fried calamari, a

wedge of lemon, a jug of ice-cold local wine, a plastic table cloth, and a beach. But if you're into gourmet meals, there's plenty of scope for those too. Picnics are also fun, and even the smallest village will have a *gastronomia* or *alimentare* (deli) where you can stock up on bread, cheeses, prosciutto, and other goodies. Do take time out in your day for lunch; Italy is all about taking things slowly and the Italians would never dream of skipping a meal.

#### **Rule #6: Improvise**

Use this book and its tours as a starting point for your adventures. Be brave, follow your instincts and whims, and explore. The locals in these parts are exceptionally friendly and if you get lost, they'll certainly help you back on track. Mix and match the tours according to your particular interests; choose a piece of one chapter, put it together with a chunk of another chapter, until you have your potpourri of a tour fixed. ●