



Itinerary For a Four Day Study Tour to Sorrento & The Bay of Naples. Prepared For The Geography Department.

Dates: To Be Confirmed.



The itinerary is designed to balance visits of the greatest interest with recreative activities. It aims to make the maximum use of time without exhausting participants. The itinerary we have proposed is flexible and is only finalised after discussion with the Party Leader(s). Flexibility is also built into the tour itself as changes can be made at very short notice according to weather conditions etc. The visit can be guided throughout. All excursions are well-prepared and are backed by notes and a commentary. The director is able to run the tour according to Party Leader wishes. In this way Party Leaders will be free to concentrate on the care of their pupils rather than the organisation of the tour. The whole stay is underpinned by excellent accommodation, catering, transport and security.

ACCOMMODATION

The Grand Hotel Moon Valley***

Penisola Sorrentina - Seiano di Vico Equense. I - 80066 (NA)

Tel: +390818028015. www.moonvalley.it

Originally founded by a large Italian corporation as a summer retreat for its employees, The Grand Hotel Moon Valley is situated in the centre of Seiano di Vico Equense on the site of an Ancient Roman 'Praedium'. The extensive grounds cover approximately 15,000 square metres & boast a rich variety of plants and trees which are maintained by a full-time team of gardeners. The hotel has 100 bedrooms, all with en-suite bathrooms, air conditioning, telephone & private terrace. Despite its proximity to the sea (a short walk down to the beach via a pedestrianised road), the hotel also has two swimming pools. There is a large restaurant, a pleasant bar & modern conference facilities. There are also antiques, artefacts from the Etruscan age & works of art on display in the hotel reception.

The town of Seiano di Vico Equense is located on the Sorrentine peninsula, a short distance from Sorrento & perfectly situated for our visits to Herculaneum, Vesuvius, & Pompeii. The local train station is within a short walk & allows for rapid transfers to Sorrento via the 'CircumVesuviana' train network. The Grand Hotel Moon Valley boasts wonderful views over the Bay of Naples, with Vesuvius on one side & Mount Faito on the other. The manager heads a particularly friendly team & we have found this hotel to provide a very comfortable & pleasant base for our groups visiting the Sorrento & Naples area.

DAY ONE

07.00	Meet at School. Load luggage into coach.
07.30	Depart School. Onward transfer to Local Airport.
08.15	E.T.A. Local Airport. Commence check in.
11.05	Depart Local Airport on Easyjet Flight 5257.
14.15	E.T.A. Naples Capodichino Airport. <i>(Note: 1 hour time difference).</i>
15.00	Coach transfer to Herculaneum.
15.45	<u>Visit to Roman City of Herculaneum</u>

Students will hit the ground running as soon as we land in the volcanically active, beautiful & historic region of the Bay of Naples. Within a few hours of landing at Naples Airport students will experience the tingle up the spine from staring face to face with a group of skeletons frozen forever in their final moments, 2000 years ago, as they cowered in terror in the beachfront boat sheds from an enormous pyroclastic wave speeding from Vesuvius at temperatures of around 400C. The skeletons are perfectly preserved by the volcanic material & are clustered in family groups. This is a powerful & poignant start to our tour & leaves students wide-eyed with fascination as the expert tour guide explains the story of the day Vesuvius erupted so forcefully in 79AD.

Nothing with prepare students for the eerie experience of walking through the deserted streets & preserved houses of ancient Herculaneum as if the people had just departed five minutes beforehand. We will enter ancient houses which still have their paintwork, fountains, ovens & roofs intact. We will then view the boat that was discovered only a few years ago containing two skeletons & a sack of coins – two poor souls attempting to push out to sea with their life savings before being engulfed by a wave of burning magma.

A visit to Herculaneum is an experience none will forget. Many of the buildings are better preserved than in nearby Pompeii due to the pyroclastic wave effect as opposed to being buried in tufa stone in Pompeii. After the guided walking tour, students will have time to explore the site independently in groups before meeting for an ice-cream or a cold drink in the café overlooking the archeological remains.

17.15	Coach transfer to the Hotel Moon Valley, Sorrento.
18.15	E.T.A. Hotel Moon Valley, Sorrento. Check-in & allocate room keys.

Students will have time to settle into rooms, unpack suitcases, shower or rest after the transfer from the U.K.

19.30

Dinner at the Hotel Moon Valley.

We will have a three-course dinner in the hotel dining room which overlooks the lush gardens & swimming pool.

20.45

Evening walk to Vico Equense Beach.

After dinner we will have a walk down the steep hill & through ancient tiny roads to arrive at the sandy beach of Vico Equense, from where pupils will look out over the Bay of Naples to the looming presence of Vesuvius against the night skyline. The steep uphill walk back to the hotel will ensure that students sleep well after their first day of the tour.

DAY TWO

08.00 Breakfast.

09.15 Coach transfer to Pompeii.

10.15 **Visit to Archeological Ruins of Pompeii.**

Founded in the 7th Century B.C, Pompeii is of great interest for historians. It is said that while Rome gives an insight into the monumental architecture of the Romans, Pompeii illustrates their everyday life.

Pompeii had been a Roman colony since 80BC & prospered with the construction of many large temples, villas & palaces until 63AD, when it was devastated by an earthquake. The city had been largely rebuilt when Mount Vesuvius erupted in 79AD & buried the whole city under several layers of molten lava & ash. Approximately two thousand inhabitants were suffocated by the acrid smoke of the eruption & participants will be able to view many of the survivors' bodies frozen in the positions in which they died.

Our visit to Pompeii will include the amphitheatre, the army barracks, several temples, shops & some important paintings that have survived to this day.

We will break for lunch at the cafeteria inside the ruins of Pompeii.

14.30 Coach transfer to Mount Vesuvius.

15.30 **Ascent to The Crater of Mount Vesuvius.**

The volcano of Mount Vesuvius is still active & last erupted in 1944. The plume of smoke which hung over the cone of the volcano disappeared in 1948 but this is of little relief to local inhabitants as scientists expect the volcano to erupt every 30 - 40 years.

After taking the bus to the base of the volcano, we hike the 1.5 km reach the summit & the cone of the volcano, from where panoramic views of the Bay of Naples can be enjoyed. Pupils can also view into the cone of the volcano which is often sulphurous & steaming.

17.30 Return coach transfer to Sorrento.

18.30 E.T.A. Hotel Moon Valley, Sorrento.

19.15 **Dinner at Hotel Moon Valley.**

DAY THREE

08.00 Breakfast.

09.30 **Day's Visit to The Amalfi Coast – Positano & Amalfi.**

We will have a private coach transfer around the headland to arrive at the Amalfi Coast, with its stunning views over the sea & craggy inlets below. Our first visit will be to the clifftop town of Positano, which appears like a vision clinging to the side of the mountain that plunges down to a small beach with some of the region's finest seafood restaurants. Because of the gradient of the town, every hotel & restaurant boasts a panoramic view & we will have time to explore the winding steep alleyways before enjoying a pasta lunch at one of the many local trattorias. After lunch, we will hike to the top of the town to meet the coach & transfer further along the coast to Amalfi.

Our transfer to the city of Amalfi takes in some of the world's most impressive views & we will arrive close to the main piazza of Amalfi. We will have time on the beach before visiting the famous Church of Amalfi & visiting the many shops & the local foodmarket in the main square.

16.30 Return coach transfer to Sorrento.

18.00 E.T.A. Hotel Moon Valley, Sorrento.

19.00 **Dinner at Hotel Moon Valley.**

DAY FOUR

08.00 Breakfast, hotel check-out, room checks & loading of suitcases into coach.

09.30 **Morning Visit to Sorrento.**

We will enjoy some shopping time in the upmarket Santa Lucia district of the city, where there are many modern shops on a street which stretches down to the waterfront. There is a pleasant market selling lemon soap, fine clay works & the town's speciality - limoncello - a liquor distilled from the ripe Sorrento lemons grown in the surrounding hills.

11.30 Walk to La Sorgente Mozzarella Farm.

12.00 **Visit to The Sorrento Mozzarella & Olive Oil Farm.**

Located in a luxuriant lemon grove in the hills of Sorrento is the ancient Mozzarella & Olive Oil Farm of 'La Sorgente'. After walking deep into the lemon grove we will arrive at the Mozzarella Fabbricazione, where we will have a demonstration by the farmer's wife, assisted by her grandmother, in the making of buffalo mozzarella using the traditional techniques & equipment. Participants will then enter the old olive oil mill, with its large stone mill to crush the olives & purify the virgin olive oil. Participants will learn from the farmer how the local producers sell their product through a local farming co-operative.

After the demonstration we will be treated to a three-course caprese salad, tomato pasta & dessert lunch, using the freshly-made mozzarella & olive oil. For many participants the final lunch on long tables under the lemon groves, high in the hills above Sorrento, is a highlight of the tour.

14.00 Walk to Sorrento Coach Park.

14.30 Coach transfer to Pozzuoli.

15.45 **Visit to The Volcanic Region of The Phlegraean 'Burning' Fields at Pozzuoli.**

Located close to Naples, the town of Pozzuoli contains a highly volcanic region known as The Phlegraean Fields. This fertile and sunny land, with a mild climate and natural sheltered ports, was inhabited by primitive and mythical peoples. The origin of the name Phlegraean (burning) Fields is Greek and was coined by the first Greek sailors to have visited the area.

The volcanic field of the region consists of multiple explosion craters and cinder cones within a 13km collapse caldera. The volcanic caldera cone was formed about 4,000 years ago during an enormous eruption containing over 80 cubic kilometres of molten magma. The long history of dramatic ground movements in this region is unsurpassed anywhere in the world. Since Roman times, the level of the ground has varied by more than 12 metres.

The volcanic activity in this fascinating region is impressive to observe, with jets of sulphurous steam, hot volcanic springs & mini-volcanoes spitting hot mud and bubbling jets of sand. The observer gains an impression of the sheer power of the volcanic activity in this historic region - the same activity that bubbles constantly under the enormous cone of Mount Vesuvius further along the Bay of Naples. The last major eruption of Solfatara is calculated to have taken place in 1198 AD.

We will visit the craters & view the bubbling magma springs before visiting the shop & enjoying a drink at the small cafeteria.

17.15	Coach transfer to Naples Capodichino Airport.
18.00	E.T.A. Naples Capodichino Airport. Commence check-in.
20.50	Depart Naples Capodichino Airport on Easyjet Flight 5260.
22.00 (Local time)	E.T.A. Local Airport.
22.45	Coach transfer to School.
23.45	E.T.A. School.

Please note that we make hotel & airline bookings upon receipt of the initial deposit payments. The airline timings and airports contained within this itinerary serve as a guide only & may change. The choice of hotel, airports and flight timings are confirmed upon receipt of initial deposits.

OPTIONAL DAY'S VISIT TO CAPRI

Day's Visit to The Island of Capri.

Situated to the south of the Bay of Naples, this 17km island is one of the most picturesque & most visited sites in the whole of the south of Italy. The 15,000 people who habitate the island live in one of only two towns - Capri & Anacapri. We will take an early-morning boat from Sorrento to land at the beautiful port of Capri. After ascending to the main piazza by funicular train we will walk through the cobbled white alleyways to admire The Gardens of Augustus, with spectacular views over the Farraglione rocks & grottos below.

Chairlift Transfer to The Summit of Capri.

Often a highlight of the whole tour, pupils will enjoy taking the chairlift from Anacapri to the summit of the highest mountain on the island. Once at the top the panoramic views are breathtaking & dramatic photographs can be taken overlooking the cliffs & the sea. The mainland of Italy & the island of Ischia can be seen in the distance.

Please note that there is a supplement of £25 for the optional visit to Capri to cover the cost of hydrofoil transfers, local buses & chairlift passes.

OPTIONAL VISIT TO ROME

Visit to The Colosseum.

The colosseum was the main arena where the gladiators used to do battle with the lions, tigers & each other. The Emperor would sit in the centre of the stadium & would have the final decision about whether or not a slave would be freed or would be executed in front of the baying crowds. The colosseum could be flooded to create an internal lake for water-jousting and a waterproof cover could be pulled over the whole stadium to protect spectators from the rain. The colosseum represented a high level of architectural expertise, even by modern standards. Once inside, pupils can view the gladiators' quarters, the jousting arena, the lions' cages and the seating area for the Emperor and his guests.

The visit to the Colosseum is always a highlight of the tour & gives students a powerful impression of the might & power of the Roman Empire as well as a glimpse into the life for the ordinary Roman living at the heart of the city.

Visit to The Ancient Roman Forum.

From the Colosseum we will walk through the Roman Forum - the political & judicial heart of the Roman Empire. Inside the Forum we will view the shrine to Caesar, near to the spot where he was assassinated, the House of the Vestal Virgins, the Temple & several Triumphal Arches. As we ascend out of the Roman Forum towards Capitaline Hill, participants will have a wonderful view of the ancient Forum with the Colosseum looming in the distance.

Visit to The Pantheon.

Commissioned by Marcus Agrippa as a temple to all the Gods of Ancient Rome, & rebuilt by Emperor Hadrian in 126AD, this building contains the world's largest unreinforced concrete dome. Built over 2,000 years ago, this circular building has a portico of enormous Corinthian columns & a hole to the sky (an oculus) which is the only source of light within the interior. The Pantheon is one of Rome's best-preserved buildings & has been in continuous use throughout its long history. We will visit the interior of the building before meeting in the busy pedestrianised square outside.

Visit to The Piazza Navona.

The Piazza Navona is one of Rome's most impressive squares & boasts some very important statues & fountains. The square was formerly used by the Romans as the setting for horse-drawn chariot races, with the track around the perimeter of the square. Today the square is lined with cafes & filled with street entertainers. The main pastime nowadays is people-watching from one of the cafes.

Visit to The Trevi Fountains

These are the most famous fountains in Rome and probably in the world. Used as the backdrop to many a black and white film classic and several well-known songs, the Trevi Fountains are best viewed at dusk when the underwater lighting makes them look spectacular. Legend has it that anyone who tosses a coin into the fountains guarantees their return to the city. The fountain was built in 1735 by the architect Salvi and was decorated by several artists from the Bernini school. The fountains are an ideal place to sit and sketch, or to simply enjoy a gelato on the famous steps facing the fountains.