

Salerno and Cilento

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Arconte Cove

Salerno is a fascinating synthesis of what the Mediterranean can offer to those who want to know it better. The city is continuously improving to better host tourists and visitors from all over the world. Its province is the largest of the Campania. Together with the Amalfi Coast, the archaeological areas of Paestum and the uncontaminated Cilento, it also includes the high plains crossed by the Sele River, its tributaries and the Vallo di Diano.



the School of Medicine of Salerno

The School of Medicine boasts ancient origins, with its roots possibly dating back to the 6th century, to

the School of Medicine then functioning at Velia. In the 13th century it obtained the right to be the only School of Medicine of the realm from Emperor Frederick II: this signed a period of greatest scientific discovery. The 14th century saw the beginning of its decline, when the important

universities of Bologna and Padova were founded. The School continued to function until 1812, when it was finally closed by Joachim Murat.



Ente Provinciale per il Turismo di Salerno

via Velia 15
tel. 089 230411
www.eptosalerno.it
informazioni e acc. turistica
piazza Vittorio Veneto, 1
tel. 089 231432

Azienda Autonoma di Cura Soggiorno e Turismo di Salerno

Lungomare Trieste 7/9
tel. 089 224916
www.aziendaturismo.sa.it

Azienda Autonoma di Cura Soggiorno e Turismo di Cava de' Tirreni

Corso Umberto I 208
tel. 089 341605
www.cavaturismo.sa.it

Azienda Autonoma di Cura Soggiorno e Turismo di Paestum

via Magna Grecia 887
tel. 0828 811016
www.infopaestum.it

Ente Parco del Cilento e del Vallo di Diano

piazza Santa Caterina, 8
Vallo della Lucania
tel. 0974 719911
www.cilentoediano.it

Comunità Montana Monti Picentini

via Santa Maria a Vico
Giffoni Valle Piana
tel. 089 866160

Cava de' Tirreni

Complesso dell'Abbazia della SS Trinità - via Morcaldi 6
tel. 089 463922

Paestum

Parco Archeologico
Museo Arch. Nazionale
via Magna Grecia 919
tel. 0828 811023

not to be missed

- Historical centre of Salerno
- Paestum
- Punta Licosa
- Palinuro
- Marina di Camerota
- Certosa of Padula

salerno and cilento in 1 day

- Salerno
- Paestum

salerno and cilento in 3 days

- Salerno
- Paestum
- Punta Licosa
- Velia excavations
- Palinuro and Marina di Camerota

- Grottoes of Castelcivita and of Pertosa/Auletta
- Certosa of Padula
- Teggiano



art and archaeology

- Cathedral of Salerno
- Paestum
- Sanctuary of Hera Argiva
- Velia
- Certosa of Padula

nature and parks

- Cilento and Vallo di Diano
- National Parks
- Oasis of Diecimare
- Oasis of Persano
- Foce Sele e Tanagro Nature Reserve
- Grotto of Castelcivita and of Pertosa/Auletta

for young people

- Salerno waterfront
- Agropoli
- Marina di Camerota
- Palinuro

shopping

Chestnut woven baskets
Copper and wrought iron
objects
Wine and typical products

outings with children

Arechi's Castle
The Living Museum of Hera
Argiva
National Parks of Cilento
and Vallo di Diano

Night strolls among the temples
of Paestum
Beaches between Palinuro
and Marina di Camerota



Grotta degli Infreschi

specialities

San Marzano tomatoes
Buffalo Mozzarella Dop
Menaica anchovies
Paestum artichokes
Controne beans
Cilento dried figs
Castel San Lorenzo wine Doc
Cilento wine Doc

spas and fitness

Contursi Thermal Baths
Montesano sulla Marcellana

Salerno

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From above, in the bright frame of sea and sky, Salerno seems as though it is hanging to the sides of the mountain, in a spectacular position on the gulf. The city became the most flourishing of southern Italy with its conquest by the Longobards in the 8th century, especially under Duke Arechi II. Seat of the principality, Salerno entered a period of splendour, also becoming an important scientific centre with its much celebrated **School of Medicine of Salerno**, the oldest such institution in the west. After the Longobards followed the Normans, and then the Hohenstaufen emperors, all of whom favoured the growth of the city, a growth that only ended in the 16th century when the Spaniards took over control.

It was in Salerno that the Allied forces disembarked in 1943. Today the city is in full rebirth, theatre of a transformation into 'city-laboratory', a model of urban revival of international importance.

The heart of the city is the **medieval quarter**, whose main artery is **via dei Mercanti** (Merchants' street). The narrow city streets, today rich with shops, follow the form of the medieval urban plan and conserve beautiful historical buildings and much of its religious architecture.

The **Duomo** (11th century) is dedicated to San Matteo and is the most important monument of the city, a masterpiece of Norman architecture. The vast porticoed atrium has, above its ancient columns, an elegant loggia decorated with inlaid wood. The atrium is dominated by an imposing romanesque belltower. On the inside two magnificent ambos are richly decorated with mosaics from the 7th and 8th centuries, and there are numerous 1500's and 1600's paintings. The Baroque crypt from the 1600's is covered in polychromatic marble. There are numerous funeral monuments, the most important of which is that of Queen Margherita of Durazzo. The **Duomo Museum** is next to the cathedral, and offers a panorama of Salernitan art over the centuries.

the Abbey of the Holy Trinity at Cava de' Tirreni

A few kilometers from the dynamic city of Cava de' Tirreni, whose centre is characterised by

picturesque porticos that have inspired it to be nicknamed the "Bologna of the south", the Abbey of the Holy Trinity (11th century) sits in a panoramic position surrounded by a circle of mountains. It is one of the most important monastic foundations of the South. The elegant Baroque church

The nearby **Provincial Archaeological Museum** is not to be missed, housed in the complex of Saint Benedict, it is one of the most interesting topographical museums of Campania.

The hub of economic life of the city is to be found in the 1800's quarter of the city near to the Lungomare **Trieste**, one of the longest waterfront in Italy, lined by palm trees, and from which you can enjoy a lovely view of the gulf. The **Verdi Theatre** was inaugurated in 1872. Its halls overflow with Renaissance-inspired décor and follow models of ancient classic inspiration. It is the cultural centre of the city. The **Villa Comunale** (City Park) is an oasis of green, a lovely public garden. Looking up towards the hills you can see the imposing **Arechi's Castle**, from which there is an enchanting panorama.

and its monastery house important works of medieval art. Next to the complex is also the Museum of the Abbey, which contains relics from the monastery.

famous travellers

How wonderful to look upon, like Ulysses, on a clear day the Gulf of Salerno towards south-east, with as backdrop the high hazy coast and the crystalline mountains. One abandons the gods of today to discover a new self.

David H. Lawrence, 1920

The Abbey of the Holy Trinity at Cava de' Tirreni



Salerno



The Sele Plains

Close to Salerno is **Pontecagnano**, the first bathing area of the Salerno coast. The interesting National Museum of Agro Picentino is to be found here, full of relics relative to the history of the area from the Iron Age to the 6th century BC. Further south is the vast plain created by the Sele river. The area around the mouth of the river (Paestum and Battipaglia in particular) is famous for the production of one of the most loved of all of Campania's products: the buffalo mozzarella Dop. Alongside the quiet roads, here and there, one can spot the buffalo at pasture. One of the most important sanctuaries of ancient times was found here, the **Heraion del Sele**, a vast complex dedicated to the great Greek goddess Hera. The sanctuary dates back to the 7th century BC and was made of many rooms, the remains of which can still be seen today.

The **Oasis of Persano** is near, once a Bourbon hunting grounds, today a well preserved natural environment. The Sele has created some unique and precious environments here, dominated by a dense wood. The symbol of the oasis is the otter, and this is one of its main habitats in Italy.

The **Natural Reserve of Sele-Tanagro** offers some magnificent scenery and is of great interest from a naturalistic point of view. In this area of rich green vegetation are the springs of the **Contursi Thermal Baths**, noted for its water and for the white mud that is used in beauty and dermatological treatments. There are numerous treatment establishments. The Santa Maria degli Angeli (9th century) and del Carmine churches are of interest, as are the archaeological sites: a Roman villa and a neolithic grave near the Tanagro river.

The Sele Plains



the Caciocavallo Podolico

This cheese is exclusively made from milk of Podolian cattle, bred in the wild around the Sele,

in the Cilento area and few other places in Campania. This peculiarity gives it the characteristic flavour which changes according to the pastures. That cheese smells of milk and hay, but his flavour is slightly grainy and spicy. Served in slices or flakes, it is excellent

accompaniment to red wine, roasted chestnuts and porcini mushrooms.



Giffoni Film Festival

During the last years, the Giffoni Film Festival, hosted at the foot of Picentini mountains, has become the

main international event dedicated to children's films.



the Regional Natural Park of the Picentini Mountains

The park stretches over 80,000 hectares between the provinces of Avellino and Salerno.

Amid high mountain tops covered in thick and sometimes impenetrable beech-wood stands, green valleys and steep gorges, cut by rivers and waterfalls, are hidden: corners of uncontaminated nature, home to rare bird species. Here the rivers Calore, Sele, Sarno and Ofanto rise.

There are two WWF protected oases, sites also cared for the EC, on the inside of the Park: Monte Polveracchio and Valle della Caccia and the Oasis of Monte Accellica.

Paestum

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At the edge of the Sele plains, where Cilento begins, is Paestum. It is one of the most precious of the archaeological gems of Italy, known the world over, especially for its spectacular doric temples. Legend attributes them to the Argonauts of Greek mythology, but it was the inhabitants of Sibari that founded Paestum in the 6th century BC. The city, first called Poseidonia, soon became one of the most flourishing of the Mediterranean. Its demise coincided with the fall of the Roman Empire. The buildings were stripped for the construction of churches and palaces, and the ruins forgotten until the 18th century, when travellers began to return here.

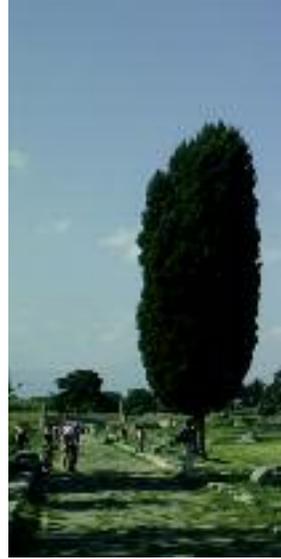
The three doric temples from the 5th century BC, among the best preserved of all of antiquity, are the marvels of this **Archaeological Park**, as they stand majestically on the plains in front of the sea: the **Temple of Neptune**, the **Basilica** and the **Temple of Cerere**. The first two are tied to the cult of Hera (Greek goddess of marriage and wife of Zeus). The 5 km long walls constitute one of the best preserved fortified structures in all of Magna Grecia. In summer the **'Night trails' amid the temples of Paestum** permit the visitor to enjoy the archaeological area by moonlight, a magical experience.

In the area of the Roman city, apart from the **Capitolium**, there are other significant remains: the **Forum**, the **Amphitheatre**, and the remains of various religious structures. To the west of the temples is via Sacra, the street of the processions, the foundations of which are Greek.

Not far from the excavations is the **Archaeological Museum of Paestum**, home to some of the most important works in Southern Italy. The most important are the frescoes from the 5th century BC **Tomb of the Diver**. It is a "painted box tomb", made up of four lateral slabs decorated with banquet scenes. The cover depicts a diving boy: the scene probably symbolises the passage from life to the world of the dead. The sculptured **metopes** are important decorative elements of the temples, as are the frescoes of the 4th century lucanian tombs, with the typical "Return of the warrior" scenes.

The Aeneolithic relics of the Gaudio necropolis are preserved here, as well as archaic, (the terracotta Zeus statue), classic and hellenistic (the bronze statue of Sileno Marsia) era items. In the museum the full room *tomb of a man and a woman* from Agropoli has been reconstructed. With the buried couple there is also a famous vase on which the myth of Bellerophon is painted, signed by Assteas. The relics of the nearby sanctuary of Hera Argiva, the *Heraion* of Sele, are also kept here.

The ruins of **Capaccio Vecchio** dominate the plain of Paestum. The town, flourishing in the Norman era, was destroyed in 1248 by Frederick II because it hosted conspirators. Apart from the ruins of the castle, the sanctuary of the **Madonna del Granato**, built in the 12th century and reconstructed in the 1700's, destination of intense pilgrimage even today, is well worth a visit.



buffalo mozzarella

The exquisite buffalo mozzarella is made only in Campania, and following unchanged centuries-old

traditions. Apart from the Caserta province, the Sele Plains are the only other place for this characteristic product.

There are many dairy farms in the area of the mouth of the Sele river: in some it is possible to watch them make it and then enjoy the fresh results.





The Temples
of Paestum

The Tomb
of the Diver.
Archaeological
Museum
of Paestum



Cilento

A scenery of strong contrasts, of incomparable beauty. Cilento enchants with its vertiginous cliffs that drop into the crystalline sea, its spotless beaches, its small medieval villages that cling to the hills and its luminous scenery of pristine nature. One of the most beautiful coasts of Italy: one hundred miles of beach, cliffs formed by the sun and the wind, secret coves and mysterious grottoes. The cilentan coast begins at Paestum and ends at Sapri, offering an enormous range of seaside activities: from large, wide and safe beaches on a clear sea, to a more sportive choice of grotto and cove exploration and the diving deep into the uncontaminated bottoms of the sea. All of this amidst hills and mountains with sheer cliffs to the sea, where enchanted villages are nestled. We are far from the madding crowds, we are where the world is still like it once was, a universe with rhythms that still follow the seasons. The Cilento area is also famous for its tasty traditional cuisine, based on typical products used in recipes passed on from mother to daughter. There is such a variety of local dishes that it will be a pleasure to compare them from town to town and in the many agritourisms and bed and breakfasts active in the area.

With **Agropoli** one enters into the heart of a Cilento made of fishermen and fishing villages. Dominated by the castle, built in Byzantine times, Agropoli has a lovely medieval village that towers over the wild coast below.

Medieval traces are also found in **Castellabate**. The village, intact and full of wonder, presents itself like a bundle of intertwining alleys, arches and steep stairs, framed by a vegetation rich with colour and aroma.

From above you can admire the characteristic red tiled rooftops of **Santa Maria di Castellabate**, a bathing and fishing village blessed with lovely beaches and situated between Punta Tresino and **Punta Licosa**.

The pine forest of Punta Licosa is splendid and uncontaminated. Here the coves, hidden and private, are tiny paradises like gems on the crown of one of the clearest seas of Italy. These waters have been declared an Underwater Marine Park, and are a true paradise for passionate deep sea divers.

The coast road itself is a source of spellbinding views and evocative nature: from **Montecorice**, with the splendid precipices of the Ripe Rosse over the sea, you reach **Acciaroli**, with its lovely old village and marvellous beach. It is said that a local fisherman was the inspiration for Hemingway's novel *The Old Man and the Sea*. Clambering up a twisting road one arrives at **Pollica**, a fresh oasis of silence, where time seems to have stood still. The view from here is stunning.

Apart from Paestum, Cilento has another archaeological gem: the ruins of the ancient Greek city of **Velia**, whose fame is tied to the great philosophers Parmenides and Zeno, and to the celebrated School of Medicine, later inherited by Salerno. *Elea*, the ancient name of Velia, was founded in the 6th century BC by the Greeks from Focea, attracted to the beauty of the place, and soon became one of the most important maritime centres of the southern Tyrrhenian area. The archaeological area extends to a promontory that was once bathed by the sea, then buried, and to the most important monument, the '*Porta Rosa*', a magnificent structure that opens in the circumference of the ancient walls.



the towers of Cilento

Beginning in the 9th century AD saracene pirates began their incursions onto the Tyrrhenian coast. Defense

towers were built to spot and fight off the invaders, and to this day dot the coast of Cilento.

These fortifications were in use until the 1700's, when the pirate menace finally ceased.



the olive tree of Cilento

The splendid olive tree, with its silvery green leaves, is a constant in Cilento scenery. Many hills are completely

covered by these trees. The oil they produce is one of the best of Italy, and has earned the denominational marking of *Oliva Extravergine Cilento Dop*.



famous travellers

Those hills form the last slopes of the Cilento mountains, all covered in olive groves, fig trees and vines.

Cosimo De Giorgi, 1882



Islet of Licosa



Marina
of Camerota



In that moment, as we pass by Pisciotta, there appears in front of us, stabbed into the sea, Palinuro, like an enormous shark, covered in gold.

Eugenio Montale, 1932

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You can admire the ruins of houses spread on the terraces and built with polygonal blocks of sandstone. On the promontory there were public and sacred buildings: there remain the relics of an Ionic temple and theatre of the 3rd century BC, of a rectangular building, and a paved road: on the southern slopes was the market (*Agora*) in the 4th-3rd century BC. You can visit the remains of Roman burial places and a thermal baths establishment, of the port, the sacred well and, higher up, the amphitheatre, the paleo-christian church, the Angevin Tower; beyond the Porta Rosa is the sanctuary of Poseidon Asphaleios.

Leaving behind the glorious deeds of the Romans and Greeks, the coast continues dotted with long sandy beaches, bunches of houses and ancient villages: **Ascea**, medieval in origin, with its charming marina and **Pisciotta**, characterised by the houses wedged in green.

Continuing along the coast it is a constant panoramic delight of magic beauty, up to the legendary promontory of **Palinuro**. It is said that it owes its name to Aeneas' unfortunate helmsman who, as Virgil recounts in the *Aeneid*, fell into the water here and perished.

Palinuro is an internationally renown bathing resort; well visited, it offers beautiful beaches, great hotels and sports centres, campsites and vacation villages. The secret of Palinuro lies in the marine grottoes to be discovered on boat trips: the Blue Grotto, whose waters assume the transparency of sapphires, the Silver and the Blood grottoes. Yellow and green are the dominant colours of the Fetente (stinking) cove, so named for the sulphuric spring that releases an unpleasant odor. The Baia del Buondormire (of the 'good sleep') with its crystalline waters is one of the most romantic beaches of the coast. The Natural Arch (Arco Naturale) is a moulded masterpiece of nature, with its long beach and nearby mouth of the river Mingardo.

Imposing cliffs, coves you can get to only in a boat, and exceptional grottoes are also to be found at **Marina di Camerota**, famous destination for summer tourism.

We recommend a boat trip to Punta degli Infreschi, with its evocative coves and clear water, and a trip, on land, to **Camerota**, on hills covered in olive groves.

The coast continues to Policastro and Sapri, passing through gracious bathing resorts like **Scario**. In the centre of the gulf to which it gives its name,

Policastro Bussentino preserves interesting remains of a castle and of medieval walls.

A fascinating excursion is that to the Grotto of Bussentino, an imposing phenomenon created by the river, and one of the most interesting of the Campania. On the southern extreme of the Campania, Sapri is one of Cilento's most important towns, with a lovely panoramic waterfront. The coast is full of ample sandy beaches, and inland there are wood covered hills in the area of **Torre Orsaia**.

Even though you are seduced by one of the most beautiful seas of Italy, the 'other' Cilento is not to be underestimated. The one of the inland, full of surprises. Nature is still uncontaminated here, like that of the coast, and is protected by the **Cilento e Vallo di Diano National Park**. There are innumerable trails that take you into this park blessed with hills, rivers, woods and paths that cut deep into the wild.

Vallo della Lucania, the most important town of Cilento from a commercial and administrative point of view, is at the centre of the main roads and railways, and the starting point of hikes into the park. Trekkers can take long hikes in the Alburni Mountains (also known as the Dolomites of the South for the clear colour of its limestone walls), on Mount Cervati (the highest summit of the Campania with 1,900 mt), or on Mount Gelbison (also known as Sacred Mountain, popular for the presence of the sanctuary of Madonna di Nova Velia on its summit). The surrounding landscape leaves its visitors fascinated: the karst phenomenon has permitted long gorges to be carved into the rock (the karst swallow holes) and mysterious grottoes, not to mention the small "mirrors of water" to be found here and there.

A stop at the evocative and famous **Grottoes of Castelcivita** is a must, with its underground system of caverns.

Inland Cilento is characterised by small villages, among which the evocative **Roscigno Vecchia**, a village abandoned due to the many landslides.

famous travellers

...I took courage, and, taking him by the hand
I asked – where are you going, handsome
captain? – Looking at me he responded:
-Oh sister, I am going to die for my beautiful
country-

Luigi Mercantini, 1857



Natural arch



Capo Palinuro



**“they were three
hundred, they were
young and strong...”**

In 1857, a group of about thirty youths led by Carlo Pisacane landed on the coast at Sapri, to begin an

anti-Bourbon insurrection. The patriots, however, were all killed by the troops. The famous poem by Luigi Mercantini, *“The Gleaner of Sapri”* was dedicated to these heroes, and every year in August, at Sapri there is a costumed reenactment of the tragic event.



Vallo di Diano

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Nature and art are the stars of the Vallo di Diano (which is part of the **Cilento e Vallo di Diano National Park**), with the marvellous grottoes of Pertosa/Auletta, the village of Teggiano and the magnificent Certosa (monastery) of Padula.

The **grottoes of the Angel at Pertosa/Auletta** are set in an evocative natural amphitheatre in the green of the Alburni mountains. They twist and turn for about 2,500 meters through galleries, tunnels and immense caverns; a truly enchanting place full of stalactites, stalagmites and huge underground halls. To add to its charm, this is the only cave in Italy where, to gain access, one has to row across a small lake originating from the underground river.

Teggiano has one of the area's most interesting historical centre, and is the ancient capital of the Vallo. It was formerly known as *Dianum*. Located on top of a round hill, it dominates the plains that, in Roman times, were dangerous swamps. Fine examples of Romanesque architecture are preserved, such as the Cathedral and the church of Sant'Andrea, often built on top of existing Roman foundations. The village, with its narrow twisting streets, is nestled around the Castle which was founded in 1285 and rebuilt in the 19th century.

The town of **Padula** has the most important monastic monument of Southern Italy, the **Certosa of San Lorenzo**. The majesty of the building, a true "convent-city", and the exuberance of the décor, make this an obligatory visit. The grandiose enormity of the complex is amazing.

Founded in 1306, the monastery followed the order's rules which dictated that the monks' cells, gathered around the cloister, be separated from the common areas which were located near to the church. The **church of San Lorenzo** is separated by a wall into two parts. In the first, near the entrance, sat the lay brothers, and near the presbytery, the cloistered monks. There are also two choirs.

The old kitchen is also interesting, with its huge dominating "cooker-hood" in the centre, and connecting tunnels to the wine cellar and oil press. The **Abbot's Apartment** is the real gem of this convent, made up of ten rooms that open onto a splendid garden. The **library** has a lovely majolica pavement, and the **ample Cloister** onto which the monks' cells open, is also impressive. With a surface of almost 15,000 sq mt it is one of the largest in Europe: the two storeys on which the convent is built are connected by a grandiose double **helix stairway**.



the wine trail flavours and history of Cilento

The trail runs all along the coast from Salerno to Marina di Camerota, with some small detours. It is an

excellent way to get to know the typical products of the area in the historical centres and among the natural beauty of the area. Wine cellars, typical restaurants, characteristic handicrafts, are all to be found in a context of picturesque villages rich with history and vineyards facing the

sea. Honest and simple hospitality can be found in any one of the many agritourisms.



Cilento cuisine

The cuisine of Cilento is a true example of the farm culture: the dishes reflect the prime ingredients used, and

the methods and traditions that have accompanied these people throughout their long history. The recipes, passed on by word of mouth from generation to generation, are based on the typical products of the area: from fish to exquisitely fresh vegetables, from beef to hand-made pasta.

Grottoes of the Angel
Pertosa/Auletta



Cloister of the Certosa
di Padula



Kitchen of the Certosa
di Padula

