

THE ISLANDS OF ISCHIA & CAPRI



ITINERARY:

The islands of Ischia and Capri, in the Bay of Naples, have been holiday destinations since Roman times. On our new **8 days/7 nights** trip we spend 4 nights on the larger Ischia and 3 nights in Capri. Because of their distinct geologies the islands are very different in character. Ischia is volcanic, has geothermal hot springs, fertile soils and lots of small settlements. Capri is an extension of the Sorrento peninsula's high limestone cliffs, with steep drops, impossibly perched buildings and only 2 towns. Both offer great walking and sightseeing away from the crowds, the flora in early May is spectacular. From Naples Airport a taxi ride takes one to either Molo Beverello for the hydrofoil service (More frequent & quicker) or to Calata Porta di Massa for ferries.

Day 1

We meet at Hotel La Madonnina, our 21 room Ischia hotel (4 nights; sea-facing rooms). It is located on the cliffs, has its own beach and spa, and is within walking distance of Ischia town (Should you require assistance with transfers and sea crossings we are happy to help and advise).

The ancient Greeks, who enigmatically referred to the island as 'Pithekoussai', meaning 'the Place of Monkeys', established their first Italian trading post here in BC 775. Once they outgrew it they moved to the mainland and founded Naples. Time permitting we shall take a stroll to the town in order to get our bearings.

Day 2

Today we explore the picturesque lanes of Ischia town and Porto d'Ischia on the island's east coast. We visit the huge

Aragonese castle built on a rocky islet connected to the main island by a walkway. Lunch will be in a typical local trattoria.

Day 3

We head to the island's north west coast to the famous gardens of La Mortella. This spectacular subtropical and Mediterranean garden was commissioned in 1956 by Susana Walton, Argentinian wife of composer Sir William Walton. The landscape artist Russell Page designed it to meld with the natural volcanic landscape. We also stop at the small but interesting Villa Arbusto museum, which displays the so called 'Nestor's cup', found locally and decorated with one of the earliest known inscriptions in the Greek language.

We continue to picturesque Forio, the largest of the island's 6 towns, where we have lunch. We may even get to have a swim at one of the island's thermal beaches, where hot water comes through the sand.



Day 4

Weather permitting today we charter a boat for a tour of the island. This offers a completely different perspective, allowing us to appreciate the beauty of the island and the charming towns that dot the coast along the Municipalities of Ischia, Casamicciola, and Lacco Ameno. Along the way we visit one or two sea caves and those brave enough can have a swim (The Med in May is fairly 'cool').

Should sea conditions not be suitable there are plenty of excursions to keep us busy exploring the island.

Day 5

After a leisurely breakfast we catch a mid morning ferry for the 45 minutes crossing to Capri. On arrival the island may feel overrun with tourists but most are day trippers and tend to concentrate around the main Piazza. Hotel Canasta (3 nights), our family-run boutique accommodation, is an oasis of peace a few minutes walk from the centre. The owners also run a famous trattoria located nearby where we shall dine at least one evening. Capri is criss-crossed by many paths and 'mulattiere' and thus is an excellent place to walk with superb views over the high coastline. In early May gardens and the Mediterranean 'maquis' are in full blossom.

Later we stroll through the pretty centre of Capri town, getting our bearings and visiting the Certosa di St. Giacomo and Giardini di Augusto.

Day 6

We head up to Anacapri, the second town on the island, set high up and surrounded by gently sloping, terraced gardens. We shall spend the day here. A 4.5 Km circular walk (2h+) takes us to Monte St Maria (Altitude gain/loss 193m) with views over the Island's north coast and towards the Sorrento coast. Back in Anacapri, after lunch we visit Villa San Michele, the life's work of the Swedish physician and author Axel Munthe (1857–1949). It is surrounded by an impressive garden with views over the sea. Axel Munthe recounts the story of his life and the creation of the villa in 'The Story of San Michele' (1929). It became one of the first international bestsellers in modern times.

Day 7

Another lovely circular walk, this 4.3 Km in length (3h; change in altitude 216m) along the SE coast, first along residential neighbourhoods to Belvedere di Tragara, where one can see the 'Faraglioni', Capri's iconic sea stacks. Then along a coastal path away from built up areas to Matermania and the view point over the 'Arco Naturale'. We shall stop for lunch along the way, before concluding our walk back in town and time to shop or further explore independently.

Day 8

Departure day. We shall assist you in organising crossings and airport transfers (Suggest not booking morning flights to give yourself time), or maybe you will opt to stay on in Naples for a night or two.

