

# **Greek & Roman Campania**

Practically the entire coast of southern Italy was colonized by the ancient Greeks many centuries before Christ. These colonies were strung out along the coast as far as the heel of Italy. The first colony was established about 765 B.C. on the island of Ischia just off the coast near Naples. Campania, the region which includes Naples, was rich in Greek colonies, among which was Naples itself.

The fertile plains of Campania were a major supplier of grain to its inhabitants, first Oscans, followed by Greeks, Etruscans, Samnites and Romans. During the Roman Empire towns dotted the landscape. Pompeii was but one of many.

## **Day 1**

Arrival in Rome. Brief bus tour of the city with panoramic views from the Gianicolo Hill and other heights. Afternoon free for rest & leisurely individual sightseeing. Optional tour of Roman Forum & the fascinating archaeological site of San Clemente, a 12th-century Christian basilica, with the remains of a 4th-century church beneath it, & below that the remains of 2 Roman buildings separated by a paved alleyway. Dinner at a local restaurant followed by an evening walk around Rome's historic center: Piazza Navona, the Pantheon, Campo dei Fiori & Piazza Farnese.

## **Day 2**

Departure for Naples. Visit to the National Archaeological Museum of Naples, containing one of the finest collections of Classical sculpture in the world. Its importance is augmented by the large collection of paintings, sculpture and mosaics from Pompeii, as well as various everyday objects unearthed there.

After lunch in a nearby pizzeria, we proceed to Pompeii or Sorrento to check in at our hotel. Rest and free time until dinner. Dinner in a local restaurant.

## **Day 3**

All day visit to Pompeii, perhaps the single most famous archaeological site in the world. An unimportant provincial Roman town, Pompeii's fame rests exclusively on its role as a perfectly preserved archaeological fossil providing a valuable snapshot of Roman daily life. Free time late afternoon. Dinner and overnight.

After a picnic lunch, we visit Oplontis, ruins of a large Roman imperial villa, believed to have been owned by Nero's wife & containing superb examples of ancient Roman wall painting.

## **Day 4**

Today we tour Herculaneum, the small fishing town & vacation resort for rich Romans from Naples that was destroyed by Vesuvius along with Pompeii in 79 A.D. In the well preserved houses wooden stairs, window sashes, & beds have been preserved, albeit singed & charred by the volcanic material that swept through the town at a speed estimated at somewhere between 65 & 200 miles per hour. Next we will ascend to the top of Vesuvius to peer into the killer crater that destroyed both Pompeii & Herculaneum and to enjoy a superb panoramic view of the Bay of Naples, Ischia and Capri.

From Vesuvius we will proceed on to our hotel in the area of Paestum, site of 3 well preserved Greek temples. Our hotel is modern with comfortable lounges, terrace, tennis court & swimming pool. It is located 150 yards from the hotel's private beach, which is reached by a short walk through a pine grove across the road from the hotel. The rooms are equipped with satellite television, air conditioning, & balcony. After dinner we shall take a stroll by the temples illuminated at night.

### **Day 5**

Half-day trip to Velia, the ruins of a Greek city on the rugged coast 30 miles south of Paestum and birthplace of the Greek philosopher Parmenides. On a promontory that juts out toward the sea, a round medieval tower stands squarely on the foundation of a Greek temple, like a lonely sentinel watching over the city in ruins below. A Greek road cuts through the ridge of the promontory through the only Greek arch extant in Italy, perfectly preserved by an ancient landslide & only excavated earlier in this century. Velia is an interesting example of how flexibly the Greeks adapted their rational principles of city planning to an unusual local topography. Return to our hotel for a rest and a swim in the sea. Dinner at the hotel & an evening walk along the beach.

### **Day 6**

Visit to the ancient city of Paestum, its Greek temples of the 6th & 5th centuries B.C., and to the other main Greek & Roman monuments of the ancient city. The temples permit us to trace the development of classical Greek architecture. In addition to some exquisite Archaic Greek sculpture, bronze & ceramic vases, & delicately crafted offerings to the Greek goddess Hera & other deities, the museum also permits us the opportunity of seeing one of the very few examples of ancient Greek painting to come down to us. Return to Rome. Afternoon free. Dinner and overnight.

### **Day 7**

Transfer to Fiumicino airport for return flight home.