

The Amalfi Coast

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View of the Amalfi Coast from Villa Cimbrone, Ravello

famous travellers

The Day of Judgement, for those amalfitans that go to heaven, will be a day like any other.

Renato Fucini, 1878

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Azienda Autonoma di Cura Soggiorno e Turismo di Positano
via del Saracino 4
tel. 089 875067
www.aziendaturismopositano.it

Azienda Autonoma di Cura Soggiorno e Turismo di Amalfi
via delle Repubbl. Marinare
tel. 089 871107
www.amalfitouristoffice.it

Azienda Autonoma di Cura Soggiorno e Turismo di Ravello
via Roma 18 bis
tel. 089 857096
www.ravellotime.it

Azienda Autonoma di Cura Soggiorno e Turismo di Maiori
corso Regina 73
tel. 089 877452
www.aziendaturismo-maiori.it

Comunità Montana dei Monti Lattari-Penisola Sorrentina
Via A. Coppola 1 - Agerola
tel. 081 8025811

Amalfi
Museo Civico
Pal. Morelli - p.zza Municipio 1
tel. 089 8736211
Museo della Carta - Pal. Pagliata
via delle Cartiere 23
tel. 089 8304561

Conca dei Marini
Emerald Grotto, which can be accessed both from the SS 63 via lift or stair and from the sea through an artificial wharf. From Amalfi, the grotto can be reached by board trip (tel. 089 873090).

Maiori
Museo della Collegiata di S.Maria a Mare - largo Campo
tel. 089 877090

The incomparable beauty of the Amalfi Coast has enchanted visitors from all corners of the earth. The lush green terraces, suspended over a sparkling sea, the wealth of art and the architectural characteristics, make it one of the most celebrated places on earth. Wild, daring and romantic, the Coast is an obligatory stop in any journey to Italy. From a geographic point of view the "coast of the Sirens" is the southern slope of the Sorrentine Peninsula, which in the north closes the Gulf of Salerno. The scenery is characterised by mighty cliffs that drop into the sea, rich with bays and coves like the splendid Emerald Grotto at Conca dei Marini and the Fiordo (Fjord) di Furore. Amidst vertiginous slopes, sheer drops and precipitous cliffs, there are places where nature is still uncontaminated, like the Vallone di Porto Oasis.

The little villages that dot the "divine coast" are all to be explored, enjoying a clear blue sea, the stupefying views, the artistic treasures and the lively high society life. Shopping is also a venerated activity: in the characteristic boutiques of "Positano Fashion", the ceramic shops of Vietri or sampling a delicious meal of traditional cuisine.



The Lattari Mountains Regional Park comprises the Sorrentine-Amalfi Peninsula and separates the

Gulf of Naples from that of Salerno, in a terrain that descends from over 1000 mts high to a wild, craggy shore. Those who enjoy hiking will find a system of 34 signposted trails that traverses the entire area, the most evocative of which being the "Sentiero degli Dei" (Trail of the Gods).

The mild climate to be found in all seasons and the uncontaminated environment favour land and sea animal life, as well as lush vegetation into which cultivation (vineyards, terraced olive and citrus groves) are admirably integrated.

not to be missed	the coast in 1 day	the coast in 3 days
Cathedral of Amalfi	Amalfi	Amalfi
Positano	Positano	Ravello
Cathedral of Ravello		Positano
		Fiordo di Furore
		Vietri sul Mare
		Archipelago Li Galli



Conca dei Marini

shopping	outings with children
Ceramics of Vietri sul Mare	Amalfi Paper Museum
Limoncello of Amalfi	Positano
Positano Fashion	Valle delle Ferriere State Natural Reserve
Wine	Beaches of Maiori

events	
April-October	July-October
_Positano Art Festival Positano	_Positano Summer Positano
June or July	August
_Regatta of the Four Maritime Republics Amalfi (Every 4 years)	_ 'Pesce Azzurro' (Sardines etc.) Festival Atrani
June-July	August 14th
_Chamber Music on the Amalfi Coast Amalfi Coast	_Landing of the Saracens Positano
June-September	October
_Ravello Festival Ravello	_Amalfi Coast Fitness Festival Amalfi Coast
_Minori in Colour Music, art, performance, culture Minori	December
_Arts Festival Amalfi Coast and Nocera-Sarno Countryside	_Christmas and New Year in Amalfi
_Amalfi by Night Music and Performance Trails	
July	
_ "A tutto tonno" Tuna Festival Cetara	
July-August	
_Jazz On The Coast Minori	
_Dance and Musical Theatre Minori	

art and archaeology	nature and parks	for young people
Cathedral of Amalfi	Lattari Mountains Regional Natural Park	Amalfi
Cathedral of Ravello	Marina di Punta Campanella Natural Reserve	Maiori
San Giovanni del Toro (Ravello)	Valle delle Ferriere State Natural Reserve	Positano
Villa Rufolo (Ravello)		Praiano
Santa Maria de Olearia Complex (Maiori)		

specialities	spas and fitness
Anchovie straining (Cetara)	Beauty centres of the major hotels
Amalfi lemons	
Minori pasta	
Cetara Red Tuna	
Amalfi Coast Doc wines	

From Positano to Amalfi

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Set into the mountain, surrounded by rich mediterranean vegetation, **Positano** is so picturesque as to seem a spontaneous stage setting. Seen from the sea it looks like a huge nativity scene, a waterfall of little multicoloured houses clinging onto its sides.

The town develops vertically. The homes, one on top of the other, are characterised by arched porticos that give onto the sea, and are painted in pastel colours, giving it the look of a multifaceted precious stone. It is not for nothing that Positano is called "the gem of the divine coast".

The narrow streets, lined with boutiques, run downhill between the houses flowing onto the **Spiaggia Grande**, a wide beach. From here there is a beautiful view of the sea, as well as of the town as it clammers up the mountainside. On the main square of Positano is the parish church of **Santa Maria Assunta**, there since the year 1,000. The great coloured majolica cupola is visible from all over town. The little beaches of Positano are charming, and easy to get to on foot or by boat: Fornillo, Fiumicello and Arienzo.

Positano is a holiday destination appreciated for VIP vacations. Around 1940 Irene Kowaliska, a painter who lived here in **Villa Sette Santi**, used Positano as inspiration for her paintings on cloth. The **Villa Stella Romana** has been host to, among other Popes, Pope John Paul II. Illustrious artists, fashion moguls and screen stars love to come here to relax.

A few miles from the coast are **Li Galli**, or "Sirenuse", a tiny archipelago made up of three islets: the Gallo Lungo, the Rotonda and the Castelluccio, considered the ancient dwellings of the enchanting Sirens. Positano is not just about the sea: **pleasant walks** take one to visit the evocative areas around **Lattari Mountains**, like **Montepertuso**, so-called because it is said that the Madonna appeared here in a hole in the cliff ("pertuso" stands for hole). A stairway of 1,700 steps takes you to **Nocelle**. It is from here that the famous Trail of the Gods (**Sentiero degli Dei**) begins, with beautiful views over the entire coast. Or you can reach the beautiful coastal **Punta San Pietro**, where there is a little church on a precipice over the sea.



shopping in Positano

Positano is synonymous with summer fashion. In the labyrinth of alleys the miracle of "made in

Positano" fashion was realised: dozens of boutiques show off their whimsical summer-wear, by now known the world over. Textiles and colours lay down the law in the world of beachwear: pareus to bikinis, casual and "gran gala" evening wear, even characteristic wedding

dresses. The hand-made leather footwear can be ordered to size. On sale are the colourful local ceramics, the paintings by the many artists that propose views of the enchanting gulf, and a wide range of typical products.

famous travellers

Positano bites deep. It is a dream place that isn't quite real when you are there and becomes beckoningly real after you have gone. Its houses climb a hill so steep it would be a cliff except that stairs are cut in it. The small curving bay of unbelievably blue and green water lips gently on a beach of small pebbles.

John Steinbeck, 1953



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Positano
Li Galli



the myth of the Sirens

The Sirenuse archipelago (now known as Li Galli) in front of Positano, three solitary rocky islets, were considered

to be the dwellings of the Sirens, mythical figures that attracted seafarers with their chants, often causing them to wreck. The myths probably served as warnings: the islets were meant to be a reference point for the sailors, if they got too close to land they would end up on the rocks. In 1924, on the islet of Gallo Lungo, the

Russian dancer and coreographer Leonide Massine built a villa (restructured in 1927 by the architect Le Corbusier) that was eventually bought by Rudolf Nureyev. In memory of these artists the Positano International Award for the Art of Dance is presented every year.



Amalfi

Valle delle Ferriere

On a slope cultivated with vines and olive trees one finds **Furore**. The ancient name for the entire area was once *Terra Furoris*, for the deafening noise made by the sea and the wind during tempestuous nights as they echoed among the high walls of the sheer **fjords** that come straight down from the plateau of Agerola. A steep set of steps takes you to the bottom. The attraction of this piece of coast is irresistible, with the fjords wedged between vines and cliffs, tiny houses and the sea.

Praiano, halfway up the promontory of Capo Sottile, was the summer residence of the Doge of Amalfi, a precocious sign of the future of the village toward becoming a relaxing holiday resort. The lower part of town goes towards Marina di Praia, a beach carved between two high rock walls. Guarding over this marina is one of the many watch-towers that dot the coast.

The nearby **Conca dei Marini** is a fishing village hemmed in by a marine loop that offers a stunning slice of panorama. The two extremes of this marvellous bay are **Capo di Conca**, dominated by the Torre di Conca (erected in the 1500's) testimony to the terrifying incursions of pirates, and the **Emerald Grotto**. The waters breaking into the grotto take on an intense green hue, caused by light filtration. This grotto is full of stalactites and stalagmites, often fused together to form limestone columns of up to 10 meters. From Conca you can get to the **plateau of Agerola** (650 mt), passing through woods and fields. The area, blessed with flowering fields renown since antiquity, is famous for its dairy products and for the exceptional views of the coast from above.

The heart and soul of the coast is **Amalfi**. In the serene blue of the sky and sea, guarded by its port, seems held in the palm of a hand. Above, the scenic drapery of the mountains, hinged like a backdrop, dotted with houses; below, a picturesque weaving of alleys and steps, all the way to the Piazza, where the Cathedral dominates from the top of its majestic stairs. A unique scene, where historic memory intertwines with unforgettable natural beauty. Suspended between the slopes of Lattari Mountains and the sea, the picturesque alleys of Amalfi today host a large number of tourists, but there was a time, when the powerful Marine Republic had its moment of maximum splendour between the 10th and 12th centuries, that they kept the outsiders (Longobards and Saracenes) at bay. Rich and populated Amalfi enjoyed lively contact with the Orient. In memory of its ancient power every four years, in June, Amalfi holds the "Historic Regatta of the Marine Republics".

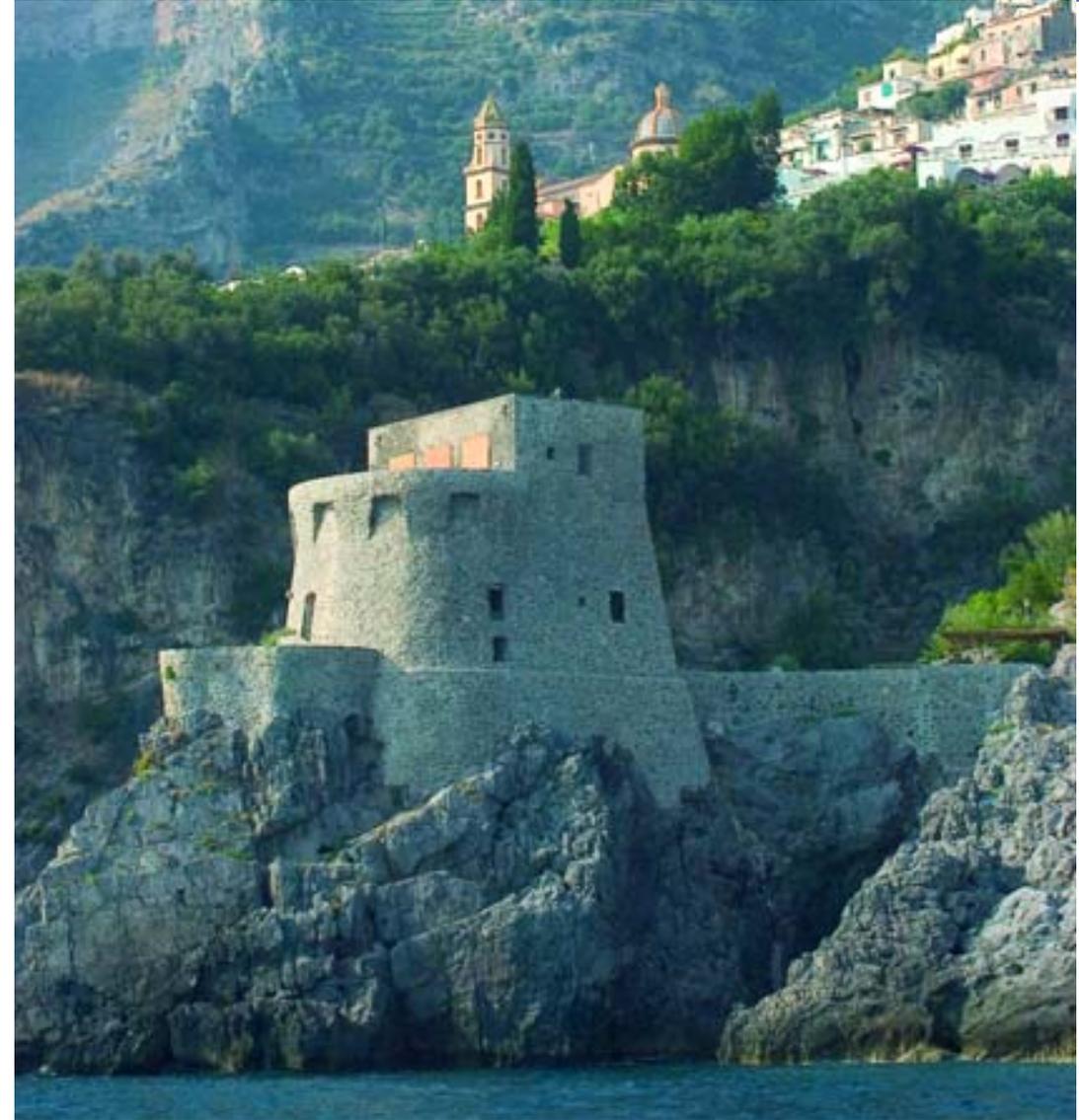
The town of Amalfi, clinging to the slopes of the coast, is characterised by the famous **Duomo** (9th century). Its scenic position at the top of steep stairs, that open up among the houses gathered around the small square, give a particular flavour to Amalfi's historic centre. The imposing polychromatic façade of the church, illuminated by gilded and enameled mosaics, is impressive. Traces of the middle ages are to be found in the elegant *Cloister of Heaven*, with its arabesque lines. From the cloister go to the *Crucifixion Chapel*, where the Diocesan Museum is hosted. In this chapel is the entrance to the crypt, dating back to the 1200's. The complex is one of the best examples of Romanesque architecture of the Amalfi coast. An exploration of Amalfi that desires the inclusion of the less known places should make a stop at the **Antichi Arsenali**, where famous galleys, with over one hundred oars, were constructed and destined to commerce with the Orient.



the "votive kiosks" of Praiano

around Praiano. They are spontaneous testimony to popular devotion, placed on walls of houses or on the borders between properties, they begged for divine protection.

There are many "votive kiosks", tiny chapels of majolica tiles or with frescoed walls, spread



Praiano



Amalfi paper

There is no documentation about the origins of paper production. In 1220 Frederick II, however,

prohibited the notaries of the kingdom, especially those from Amalfi, from using "bambagina" paper (as it was then called) for the writing of Acts, because it was considered more perishable than parchment. None the less, its spread could not be arrested, and the art of paper-making was

diffused all over the Coast, especially after the Council of Trent decreed the obligation of recording all the sacramental acts, deaths and religious events. In the 15th century the fame of Amalfi paper was such that many foreign authors demanded to be published in Naples to be able to use

the prized material. Even today, in a reduced manner, the paper-makers of Amalfi, the oldest in Europe, still handmade the precious paper for use by artists or limited editions.

The aerial precipice of Amalfi is immersed in a network of pure colours that does not repeat the nauseating and lazy colours of certain famous tropical seasons along the route of the great journeys. Here is the garden that we are eternally and uselessly searching for, after the perfect places of our childhood.

Salvatore Quasimodo, 1966

The *Tabula Amalphitana* is preserved in **Palazzo Morelli**, seat of the municipality and of the Civic Museum. It was the first code of naval law, established in the times of the Republic and valid for the entire Mediterranean Sea. The famous “drafts” of Domenico Morelli, one of the most famous painters of the 1800’s, from which the mosaics which adorn the church were created, can be admired. Amalfi is also famous as the home of handmade paper.

The first workshops were opened along the **Valley of the Mills**, where the **Paper Museum** is. This area, crossed by the Canneto River, and that of the nearby **Valley of the Ferriere**, a charming natural environment, constitute a Natural Biogenetic Reserve. The ascent from Amalfi is tiring but fascinating. The remains of the mills that brought the water to the paper workshops are discovered, and the walk in nature that hides secret charms, is rewarded with springs and waterfalls, and glimpses of the sea between the lush mediterranean scrub.

Almost tied to Amalfi, **Atrani** preserves in the intricacy of its little streets, stairs and overpasses, its medieval texture. During the Republican era of Amalfi, Atrani was inhabited by noble families. Here Doges were crowned and buried.

Between alleys, arches, courtyards, little squares and with its typical small stairways, it seems like a nativity licked by the sea. Atrani faces the sea with the characteristic profile of the **Maddalena Church** (1274) that is topped by a belltower and cupola that is covered with vividly coloured majolica. The neoclassic church of **San Salvatore de’ Bireto**, on piazza Umberto I was founded in 940. It was in this church that the election ceremonies and inaugurations of the new Doges of the Republic were held. The **Grotto of the Saints** can be reached by the state road. Here the ruins of the ancient benedictine monastery of Santi Quirico e Giulitta, founded in 986, are visible. The little grotto is decorated with byzantine style frescoes that date to the 12th century.



the stairs of the Coast

What would the Amalfi Coast be without its stairs? They are everywhere: a characteristic of its villages,

agile and indispensable communication system to overcome impervious height differences. It does not take long to become accustomed to them, one soon learns to appreciate its picturesque and, above all, ecological aspect, useful also in disintoxication from stress and city noise.



the Wine Trail of the Amalfi Coast

The Road twists amidst terraces that hold hanging vineyards on precipices over the sea, suddenly

opening with marvellous views, between the valleys and gorges where the splendid architecture of the coast clammers upwards. The traditional vines are cultivated here, and are renamed by the locals, like Falanghina, become Bianca Zita (white girl); Biancolella, become Bianca Tenera

(tender white) and Lo Sciascinoso, Olivella. The wines produced are all Costa d’Amalfi and Ravello Doc wines (www.sito.regione.campania.it/agricoltura/home.htm)



The Emerald Grotto



Amalfi Cathedral



...close to Salerno is a coast looking out at sea, called by the locals the coast of Amalfi, covered with little towns, gardens and fountains, and men rich and profitable in the art of trade and other. Amongst the towns there is one called Ravello.

Giovanni Boccaccio, 1351

One of the gems of the Amalfi coast is **Ravello**, 350 meters above sea level, where the light effects and magical architecture create a vision of rare intensity. Its name is immortalized in Boccaccio's *Decameron*.

Famous for its tranquil and serene atmosphere, Ravello offers architectural gems of rare elegance. The 11th century **Duomo**, dedicated to San Pantaleone, is rich with artistic treasures like the grand bronze central door adorned with 54 panels. To the right of the Cathedral a square tower marks the entrance to **Villa Rufolo**. Immersed in a verdant park of exotic and mediterranean flora, the original structure dates back to the 13th century; and even today some of its arab-sicilian architecture is evident. The polychromatic arabesque colonnade is splendid. The garden is one of the most beautiful in Campania.

Nature and man's touch compete to create a highly evocative atmosphere: villas lined by lime trees and cypresses, cascades of flowers. From the belvedere the sea seems infinite. Each summer, in the gardens of the villa, the concerts of the *Ravello Festival* are held. Wagner's inspiration for the Klingsor Garden, in his opera *Parsifal*, came from the gardens of Villa Rufolo.

Villa Cimbrone was, originally, a simple hut. It was bought in 1904 by Ernest William Beckett, who transformed into an exceptionally fascinating Villa. It has hosted many celebrated personalities, from Winston Churchill to Greta Garbo.

There is a very special feeling in the cloister of the villa, still showing elements of the ancient arab-sicilian style it was built in. The belvedere is a terrace that gives on to infinity, and has no equal in the world.

San Giovanni del Toro and **Santa Maria a Gradillo churches**, both built in the 12th century, also merit a visit. The San Giovanni del Toro church has a pulpit rich in mosaic decorations.

The **Coral Museum**, which exhibits coral, cameos, decorated mother-of-pearl and shells from Roman times to the 1900's, is also interesting. **Scala** is close to Ravello, one of the most picturesque site of the coast. Its Cathedral has a wooden *Deposition from the Cross* dating back to the 1200's.

A charming seaside village, **Minori**, with its little pink houses over the beach, also offers splendid scenery. For its lovely position along the coast, it was where the ancient Romans dedicated themselves to *relax*, as witnessed by the many ruins, amongst which the **Villa Romana**, from the 1st century BC, a 2,500 sq mt archaeological complex containing a *viridarium* (garden), a nymphaeum-triclinium, and the splendid mosaics. At the **Antiquarium Museum** there are relics dating back to the 1st century BC. In the centre of the village, near to the little port, is the **Basilica of Santa Trofimena**, patron of the city, built in the 12th century. Many other little churches and towers dot the area.



artists in Ravello

Other than Wagner, musicians, writers and artists have found in Ravello their artistic

inspiration: the inventions of Grieg's *Peer Gynt* owe much to the woods of Ravello. Toscanini, Leonard Bernstein, Rostropovich, and Bruno Walter also spend relaxing time here. Mirò, Escher, Turner, whose seascapes of the area are to be found in London's Tate Gallery, as well as the writer

and art critic Ruskin, were also guests here. Forster, author of *Room with a View*, describes parts of the town; David Herbert Lawrence wrote many chapters of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* here, and André Gide set part of his novel *The Immoralist* here. Many more came here to enjoy the

unique beauty, others settled here for good: Virginia Woolf, Paul Valéry, Graham Greene, Tennessee Williams, Rafael Alberti and Gore Vidal.

Villa Rufolo

Villa Cimbrone

Ravello Cathedral





Roman Villa, Minori

With its long beach and lovely shoreline, **Maiori** boasts the best hotels of the area. Ruins of castles and towers give testimony to its medieval splendour, when it was encircled and defended by walls and fortifications. The church of **Santa Maria a Mare** dominates the town, and on every year on August 15 festivities commemorate an event dating to 1204, when fishermen pulled a statue of the Virgin from the water after it had been dumped by a boat from Constantinople that was in trouble and had sought refuge in the Maiori bay during a tempest. On the main altar there is a wooden sculpture of the Madonna and Child, and a collection of art is cared for in the **Sacristy Museum** and the crypt below it. The popular **sanctuary** dedicated to the **Madonna delle Grazie** has medieval origins, but was restructured in the 1700's. The unusual stone complex of **Santa Maria Olearia**, a benedictan abbey built around the year 1000 is worth a visit. In the buildings that hug the rock cliff, in one of the natural grottoes of the area, there are halls, chapels, and small frescoed porticos. A boat trip will take you for a visit to the **Grotta Sulfurea** and the **Grotta Pandora**. The first one is rich in sulfuric-magnesian water with therapeutic properties; in the second one the emerald-green scene, the stalactites and stalagmites create an unforgettable scenario. Also around **Minori** one can find many signs of the past, a lovely seaside resort as well as a grand Roman villa.

A few kilometres from Maiori is **Erchie**, with a tower on a boulder which separates the two beaches. The benedictine monastery Santa Maria de Erchie, founded in 980 and destroyed in 1451, gave this place its name. This small village with the characteristically white houses, the delightful beaches and the crystaline sea is ideal for a moment of relax in contact with nature.



the ceramics of Vietri

The advantageous position of the town, the ample supply of water and the richly wooded hills are all

elements which over the years have lead to the development of the factories. The ceramics of Vietri, small masterpieces, are decorated with yellow and blue, the colours of nature and the sea, and with lemons and trusses of grapes. It is a pleasure to stroll about, to browse in

the shops, visit the factories, and let your imagination be caught up in the whirlwind of colours and ideas. The choice is practically infinite and each shop differs in style and design.



Ceramics of Vietri

Just before Vietri is **Cetara**. This has always been a fisherman's village and its name comes from the latin word *'cetaria'*, or tuna fishing net. This village with its picturesque white architecture and its intimate beach is one of the jewels of the coast. In between the little square houses the church of San Pietro stands out with its majolica cupola and its bell tower from the 13th century.

At the base of the Amalfi Coast, on the side facing the Gulf of Salerno, **Vietri sul Mare** dominates from the small Valle di Bonea above, erected on the bastions of limestone and sloping down to the coast. With its small churches, their majolica-covered domes, and the small tile-covered houses, Vietri seems suspended between heaven and earth. In ancient times the town was Etruscan, but it was later dominated by the Samnites, the Lucanians and finally by the Romans. The church of **San Giovanni Battista** (St John the Baptist), dating to the 17th century, with its majestic dome and high bell tower, is located at the highest point of the old centre of town. The **ceramics** industry, for which Vietri is world famous, was already a booming business in the Middle Ages. Over the centuries artisans and artists have created prized works, a part of which can be admired in the **Ceramics Museum** which is located in the belvedere-tower of the Villa Guariglia in **Raito**.

famous travellers

I have never seen more gracious places. The first you find is Maiori... The solitary streets and tranquil trails enter into the mountain, from which clear and fresh waters spring. So much romantic solitude restores one's soul and gives birth to the desire to live there in peace, or at least spend a summer.

Ferdinand Gregorovius, 1861



View of the Amalfi Coast

View of Cetara



pasta in Minori

Thanks to the stream Farinola or Reginna Minor, which activated the mills, Minori has a flourishing

pasta tradition: at the beginning of the 1900's its reputation was not second best to even the famous pasta of Gragnano in the province of Naples. The fusilli, made of semola, grain and water, are twirled with a thin iron rod.



the straining of anchovies in Cetara

Cetara is known to gourmets for this 'distilled' dish, obtained by a special process of the salting of the

anchovy caught in the gulf of Salerno. The straining seems to be a noble descendant of the *'garum'*, the ancient fish sauce used by the Romans for flavouring their dishes. The precious liquid was obtained by pressing anchovies.