

### Italy: The Heart of the Cilento National Park

Tour code: JCN

Revised: Oct 08

This tour will be of particular interest to those who may have already enjoyed our trips in Italy. The Cilento E Vallo Di Diano is an Italian National Park, established in 1991. The park boasts some of the few remaining wolves in Europe and there are 1800 species of plants including a few that are endemic to the area. The real joy of the trip is the tranquillity that you will find, roaming between little medieval villages, forests and the limestone hills, linked in the valleys by ancient stone bridges. If you have walked in Tuscany or along the Amalfi Coast, you will be surprised by the quiet nature of this tour and the few tourists who are around.



#### Travel Information

**Travel:** The nearest airport is Naples

**Arrival:** From Naples central train station it is about one hour to Capaccio by train then a short bus journey to Roccaspede. You will be met on arrival and before being transferred to your accommodation in Felitto there is a short visit to the town center and the castle.

**End of Tour:** The tour ends after breakfast on Day 9. Taxi to the train station at Sicignano for your return journey to Naples, which takes approx. 2 to 2.5 hours.

**Season:** April to November excluding mid July and the whole month of August, it is just too hot!

#### Level of Difficulty

**Grade:** Moderate

There is some steep walking uphill, occasionally on paths with rough surfaces. On some days extensions or shortcuts are possible. Most of the walks are on good paths, but some overgrown stretches cannot be avoided! Through the extensive footpath network of the area a wealth of natural and cultural treasures can be reached relatively easy. We walk through beautiful pristine natural areas and attractive countryside. We pass close to beautiful chapels and ancient farmhouses, cross-medieval bridges and will see caves and waterfalls. On the way there are several nice little medieval towns to be visited. The walking times given here on the dossier do not include time for stops.

**Fitness:** A high standard of fitness is not necessary but clients should be able to walk for up to 5 hours a day in hot sun on dusty or stony tracks. This walking is over distances of around 9km to 15km.

**Waymarking:** Only a very small part of the route is waymarked; elsewhere it is necessary to follow the route descriptions provided together with the maps.

#### General Information

**Baths:** it is not normal for your room to have a bath, the main reason being that it takes up a lot of space, some hotels/guesthouses may have a separate room in the house where a bath is available to guests, but in the main it is showers.

**Breakfasts:** in countries such as Italy usually consist of coffee and croissant; sometimes, bread rolls, yoghurts, ham and cheese as well. If you want more for breakfast then we would suggest you purchase some food the night before. It is important for you to tell us if you have any dietary requirements when you book your holiday so that we can inform everyone that you are staying with.

**Single Supplements:** are payable on most of our tours. The single supplement guarantees the privacy of your own room, however, rooms can at times be small and in some places may not enjoy the same facilities as double/twin rooms.

**Language:** Note that you will not necessarily come across people speaking English. Remember you have left home to find things different bring a phrase book, try to learn a bit of Italian!

**Luggage:** When staying in hotels, sometimes your luggage may have been taken to your room awaiting your arrival. However don't be surprised if your luggage is waiting for you to take it up to your room please politely ask someone if you need assistance.

#### Accommodation & Meals

Accommodation is on a half board basis on 6 nights and 2 nights are bed & breakfast only, staying in Felitto,

Sant'Angelo and Sicignano in attractive farmhouses ('agriturismo'), in Valle dell'Angelo in a recently restored village hotel, all with en suite facilities. No picnic lunches are included in the tour price, but these can be prepared for you by the owners of the accommodation you will be staying in or materials for picnics can be purchased in the villages where you stay.

**Nights 1 & 2:** These are spent in Felitto in a good 'agriturismo' it is located just outside the medieval village, in a beautiful green valley.

**Nights 3 & 4:** We stay in Valle dell'Angelo, where we stay in a completely new, comfortable 'village hotel', in the pretty town square

**Night 5 & 6:** We stay just outside the little town of Sant'Angelo, at the south side of the Alburni Mountains, in a recently restored beautiful farmhouse, which also boasts a swimming pool.

**Night 7 & 8:** The last nights are spent in a comfortable 'agriturismo', just outside the little town of Scorzo – Sicignano, underneath the towering Alburni mountains.

## Outline Itinerary

**Day 1:** Arrival in Felitto. Pickup service from Capaccio or Roccadaspide, which can be reached from Naples by train and bus. Short visit to the town centre and the castle before transfer to the agriturismo.

**Day 2:** From the town square of Felitto we descend into the gorge and follow the river. The path has several good viewpoints overlooking the canyon. We come across caves (one formerly inhabited by a hermit) and the ruins of watermills. Underneath the towering coloured rocks we arrive at a famous medieval bridge, one of the best preserved in the area, at the very scenic entrance of the canyon. From here through forest and countryside we walk back to Felitto. 12km – approx 4-5 hours walking.

**Day 3:** From Felitto we take a 30-minute bus journey to Laurino. You can see this town, on a hill, high above the river. We start our walk following the canyon below Laurino. We arrive at a small medieval bridge, which leads to the little church of Sant'Elena. From here a good mule track leads into the mountains. We then follow the spectacular green Spornia valley. We head towards the beech forest, and discover one of the most interesting karsts phenomena - a river disappearing into the ground. The way back, again on ancient mule tracks, takes us along some of the most amazing viewpoints of the area. An optional visit brings us to the cave of St. Michael, with a statue of the Archangel. From here its an easy way down to the pretty little village of Valle dell'Angelo, the 'Valley of the Angel', where we will find our accommodation for the night. 15km – approx 5 hours walking.

**Day 4:** From Valle dell'Angelo it is a short walk to Piaggine, another pretty village, where we can wander along the narrow medieval streets and drink a coffee in the town square. Then we start the real walk, descending into a pretty green valley, with maquis, olive groves and orchards; an old path brings us to the small town of Sacco, where the cathedral should be visited. An old muletrack leads us down to the Sammaro River, which here comes to the surface, after having run underground for several kilometres. An ideal spot for a picnic lunch. The path then takes us up to Roscigno Vecchio, a Pompei of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The little village, abandoned at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, has remained unchanged since then, a beautiful setting especially at sunset. From Roscigno we take the bus back to Valle dell'Angelo. 14km – approx 5 hours walking.

**Day 5:** Today you will be collected and driven by car to Roscigno, where we start the walk in the town centre. From here we climb up to Monte Pruno, an archaeological site and

a beautiful viewpoint over the whole area. From here we walk down to Corleto Monforte, as the name suggests, a fortified mountain, with a pretty medieval town centre overlooking the valley. Along an ancient muletrack we then walk to Sant'Angelo a Fasanella, one of the most interesting little towns in the area.

10km – approx 4-5 hours walking.

**Day 6:** First we walk to the town centre of Sant'Angelo with an impressive church in the cave of St. Michael, certainly one of the most beautiful churches you will have ever seen! We walk down through the medieval streets to the river Fasanella. We follow the river valley, along an old Roman muletrack, and come to one of the most picturesque sites of the National Park: The Risorgenza dell'Auso, where the river Auso comes to the light, after having run underground for several kilometres. The ruins of the medieval watermills and the bridge make the picture complete. From here we walk up to the church of Cardoneto and then along ancient steps to the nice little village of Ottati, from where we go back to Sant'Angelo, either by bus or on foot.

9km – approx, 4 hours if using the bus. 14km – 5-6 hours walking if walking back.

**Day 7:** A short transfer brings us to the high plain of the Alburni Mountains, a wild calcareous mountain chain with many caves, huge beech forests and bare rocks, an area with an impressive bird life. We walk along easy muletracks to one of the most impressive viewpoints of the area: 'Il Figliolo', a sheer drop of several hundreds of meters and a marvellous site to overlook the plain of Salerno, the sea and the mountain plains. Then along ancient mule tracks we walk down to the village of Petina, where we have time to wander through the old streets, before taking the bus to Sicignano, to our 'agriturismo' for the night.

12km – 4 hours walking.

**Day 8:** On this last walking day we will visit the north side of the Alburni mountains. We walk through attractive countryside and a few little villages. For those who want, there is the possibility to walk up into the 'real' mountains. Several possible options today ranging between 2-8 hours walking, depending on what option is taken.

**Day 9:** End of tour. Depart Scorzo – Sicignano

**Extra Nights in Hotels:** It is possible to include extra nights in any of the accommodation en route. Details and prices on request

**On Self-Guided tour we provide you with:** Route notes, maps at 1:25,000 scale.

## The Tour Price Includes:

Transfers from Capaccio train station to Felitto upon arrival, transfers from the agriturismo to the village and back if necessary; a pick-up from Roscigno on day 4, a transfer to Roscigno on day 5, a transfer into the mountains and a pick-up from Petina on day 7, and a transfer to the train station (if necessary) on the day of departure. Luggage transport between all accommodations is included.

On day 3 clients have to take a bus, cost not included, only a couple of euros however.