

# Cilento: Discovering the Undiscovered

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Blue waters shine in the distance and the bright, sandy beach traces a long line down the shore. I'm standing in the square of the medieval town of Castellabate overlooking the **Cilento coast, one of Italy's closely kept secrets**. My husband and I have just returned from exploring Cilento in the region of **Campania** and the province of Salerno. We were guests at [Il Rifugio in Agropoli](#) managed by [The Pinelli Estate](#); a private villa with an infinity pool overlooking **Cilento Wine Country**. Here's a quick round-up of what I discovered. Soon, I will be updating the site with more information on Cilento tourism and the Campania Region.

# The Garden of Italy



**Acquasale con mozzarella** – yesterday’s bread dipped in salty water served with buffalo mozzarella, oregano and basil leaf  
Known as the “Garden of Italy” for its rich agriculture, Cilento boasts the largest **tomato** crops in Italy and the **dairy** farms produce the highest quality milks, creams and cheeses; in particular **mozzarella di bufala** (mozzarella cheese made with buffalo milk). **Olive** trees, hot **pepper** and **wine** grapes also grow abundantly here. The food is absolutely amazing and fresh. The **Cilento National Park** and the Diano Valley are UNESCO world heritage sites.

# Campania is More than the Amalfi Coast



Santa Maria di Castellabate

Just steps away from **Amalfi**, **Positano**, and **Sorrento** the towns of Agropoli, Palinuro, Santa Maria di Castellabate and Acciaroli are gaining recognition. In 1953, John Steinbeck wrote about Positano “...a dream place that does not seem really real when you are there, but that is real and tempting once you have left.” Since then, Amalfi has been the *prima ballerina* and Cilento has hidden her beauty from the limelight.

Like many parts of Italy, the spotlight has shifted and travelers are looking at unexplored areas. In Cilento, you can avoid the congestion and crowds and live an authentic Italy travel experience. The **Agropoli** harbor hosts both fishing vessels and luxury yachts. **Palinuro** was used as a set in the Hollywood blockbuster Wonder Woman. **Santa Maria di Castellabate** is a charming little beach town with a castle and **Acciaroli** was where Ernest Hemmingway spent long retreats sipping grappa with the locals.

# Private Hideaway



Agropoli Beach promenade

Undiscovered by most travelers, Cilento is the perfect getaway for privacy and intimacy. An endless stretch of velvety sand facing westward offers relaxing days of pleasure and stunning sunsets. Beaches proudly display their blue flags awarded for environmental excellence. Rent a yacht at the Agropoli Marina or have a romantic dinner at one of the quality restaurants along the strip. The long beachside promenades are perfect for long, hand-holding walks.

# Ancient History



The Temple of Athena and the Temple of Neptune in the Archeological Park of Paestum

Campania is rich with history, culture and tradition. Naples and its ancient underground city, Mt. Vesuvius, Herculaneum, Pompeii, and Villa Caserta are all a short distance from the coast. The Temple of Athena and the Temple of Neptune in the Archeological Park of **Paestum** are the largest ancient Greek ruins outside of Greece.

# Where to stay

## Il Rifugio

### Agropoli, Italy



Il Rifugio is an antique farmhouse with designer interiors and an infinity pool overlooking Cilento

We were guests at **Il Rifugio in Agropoli**. [Il Rifugio](#) is an antique, refurbished farmhouse overlooking the hills of Cilento Wine Country. Managed by **The Pinelli Estate**, who welcome guests to the villa rental with your choice of full butler service or self-catering. And guess what – it comes with a yacht! (No joke!)



The Pinelli Yacht, a Rizzardi motor yacht comes with the villa

See Il Rifugio and other accommodation on [booking.com](https://www.booking.com)

## How to get to the Cilento area

### By Plane

**Fly to Naples international airport** (then private or public transportation.)

Airlines that fly to Naples are: Alitalia, Easyjet, Volotea, Ryanair, Air Italia, Blue Air, Eurowings, Transavia, Jet2.com, Brussels Airlines, Finnair, Lufthansa, Vueling, Swiss, Air Cairo, Wizzair

**Fly to Salerno-Amalfi Airport** (then private or public transportation.)

Airlines that fly to Salerno are Alitalia, AirDolomiti, Carpatair, Danube Wings, Air Alps, Air Vallee, Medavia

There is an airport train to/from Napoli Centrale station.

[Check flight deals and offers](#)

## By Car

The best way to get to the smaller towns of Cilento is to drive. We flew into Naples airport and [rented a car](#) from [Europcar](#) and then drove to Agropoli-Castellabate, which was about 1 hour and 40 minutes. (From Salerno airport it is about a 45-minute drive.)

[If you book a taxi](#), it may cost you more or less €165, about the same as a rental car.

If you are staying at Il Rifugio or in other quality accommodation, they can arrange transportation for you.

**Insider tip:** If you drive from Naples airport, leave time to stop at Herculaneum, the ancient city below Mt. Vesuvius which suffered the same fate as Pompeii. Pompeii and Paestum are also along the route.

## By Train

**Stazione Napoli Centrale** – Naples has a large central station and can be easily reached by Milan, Rome, Florence, Bari and all major cities in Italy.

From the Naples airport, there is a 15-minute airport train to the Napoli Centrale Station and costs €5 (one-way).

To arrive at your coastal town, you will then have to get a local train. From Napoli Centrale Station the train to **Agropoli-Castellabate** takes about 1 hour 20 minutes and costs €7.80 (one-way).

Book your train tickets on [Trainline.com](https://www.trainline.com)



Article and photos: Celia Abernethy  
Photos of Il Rifugio: courtesy of The Pinelli Estate