

Pictures by Fabrizio Fiorenzano

NAPLES

INSTRUCTIONS: FOR USE

In 2001 Fabrizio was awarded a gold medal in the International Biennial Exhibition of Contemporary Art in Florence and in 2002 first prize for photography from Unesco Italia. He has held many exhibitions and as well as his contributions to *italy* he also works with several Italian and foreign periodicals.

Fabrizio Fiorenzano is half Sicilian and half Neapolitan and lives in Naples. Here he writes candidly about how to enjoy this incredible city safely

IN THE EARLY 1800s, the father of the great composer, Gaetano Donizetti, said to his son, 'You will never be a composer unless you go to Vienna or to Naples.' At that time Naples acted as a magnet, attracting writers, musicians and poets. It has always been a vibrant place, blessed with a natural beauty, making it one of the most fascinating cities in the world. Its majestic bay, sweeping round from Vesuvius to Pozzuoli and encompassing world-famous names such as Pompeii, Capri and Ischia, is one of the most evocative sights on earth.

Divided into 21 districts and with a population of one million, Naples has developed over the years until it often seems more crowded than Tokyo. Unchecked construction work has filled every corner, leaving little space for parks or relaxation. The extensive historic centre is the ancient heart of the city. Its narrow streets are filled with cars and scooters, a law unto themselves, paying little heed to signs and traffic lights. In some parts the high level of air and noise pollution means that life can be challenging, to say the least.

To the tourist, Naples gives the impression of a colourful city, marked by close human contact and an amusing and picturesque sense of disorganisation, but it is also a place where



Chiesa San Francesco

you should be on your guard. Per capita income is among the lowest in Italy, while the cost of living is one of the highest and consequently in some quarters tourists need to be aware that they may be the targets of street crime. But please don't let this put you off visiting this incredible place. By taking on board a few sensible precautions you can make sure that your visit is a safe and pleasant one.





Chafet Mergellina – harbour-side refreshments



Sfogliatelle stand – a famous Neapolitan sweet

They say if you can drive in Naples, you can drive anywhere. This is because the rules of the road are completely ignored!

GETTING AROUND

It is often very pleasant to discover a new city by yourself but sensible advice would be to try and avoid this in Naples as a lone tourist is an easy target. Far better to go around with others which will make your stay safer and less stressful – depending on who you go with!

They say if you can drive in Naples, you can drive anywhere. This is because the rules of the road are completely ignored. By all means give it a go if you feel up to it, but it really isn't necessary to take your own car or scooter into Naples. The good news is that there is an excellent public transport network. You can happily enjoy the beauties of the city by taking advantage of 'City Sightseeing Italia', a large network which specialises in guided tours in double-decker coaches. There are three itineraries: works of art, views of the Gulf and San Martino. These leave every 15 minutes from piazza Municipio and for 20 euros per person will take you around the city's marvels in complete safety.

As with any big city, it goes without saying that you shouldn't put your wallet in a back pocket when travelling, far better to wear a money belt. In fact, it is a good idea to avoid obvious displays of wealth, particularly jewellery, cameras and video cameras. Ladies should avoid a handbag with shoulder straps and keep your handbag by your feet not on your knees in a car. It is reassuring to know that there are actually security guards in plain clothes on the buses to try to prevent pickpocketing.

If you arrive at the central station, you will be confronted by piazza Garibaldi. This is a place even locals are careful of, so best leave it quickly. As soon as you get off the train you will probably be accosted by persuasive offers of taxis. These are illegal vehicles, without permits or meters. Do not enter into conversation, don't even smile. Walk straight out of the station and take a licensed taxi from the rank. Authorised taxi drivers never go to the train to offer their services.





Galleria Umberto I

One of Naples' unique locations is the 'Spanish Quarter'. This area, very close to the centre, is a chessboard-like network of streets rising from via Toledo (which bears the name of the Viceroy, Don Pedro de Toledo, who ordered its construction) to the hill of San Martino. At one time this was the site of the encampments of the Spanish military garrisons, hence the name 'Spanish Quarter'. It is well worth a visit, but it is best to go with at least one other person. Apart from anything else, it is very easy to get lost but a good guide will help you to understand and appreciate the attractions of the area. The website www.ilvagabondo.org organises excellent guided tours of the Spanish Quarter at 10 euros per person. 'Il Vagabondo' (+39) 081 5447821 or (+39) 347 4494905 (viaggi@ilvagabondo.it)

My final piece of advice would be not to buy anything unless it's from a proper shop. Many people, thinking they have got a

8 must-see sights.. in Naples

1. Castel Sant'Elmo (San Martino)

This fortress is the emblem of the city and is the location for important events open to the public

2. La Cappella di San Severo

The Cappella Sansevero is a fine example of Neapolitan Baroque and contains exceptionally beautiful marble sculptures, including the enigmatic *Veiled Christ*.

3. Il Duomo (right)

Naples' oldest cathedral, built by the emperor Constantine I.

4. Maschio Angioino (piazza Municipio)

This castle was built towards the end of the 13th century, at the time of Angevin rule over the city.

5. Underground Naples

Right in the centre of Naples, but 40 metres underground, is a huge maze of tunnels, quarries and aqueducts, still largely unexplored. (www.napolisotterranea.org)



6. Palazzo Reale (Piazza Plebiscito)

From 1600 to 1946 this was the seat of royal power in Naples and southern Italy.

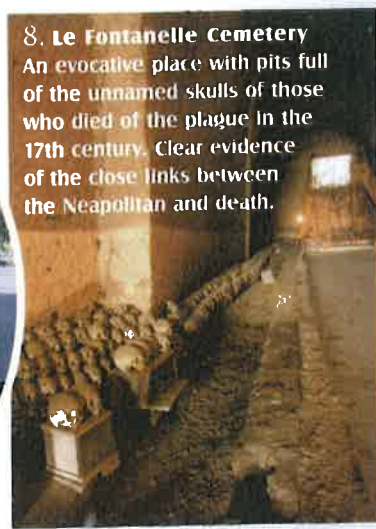
7. Galleria Umberto I

Set with precious Capodimonte ceramics, it makes a rewarding visit. At Christmas, it plays host to a wonderful Neapolitan crib.



8. Le Fontanelle Cemetery

An evocative place with pits full of the unnamed skulls of those who died of the plague in the 17th century. Clear evidence of the close links between the Neapolitan and death.



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BUT
don't be surprised by...

- ... piles of rubbish littering streets and pavements. Strikes, disputes or lack of infrastructure have made this a common sight every year for decades now
- ... at least 50 per cent of motorcyclists riding without crash helmets and many car drivers ignoring the seat belt law and driving straight through red traffic lights
- ... mopeds driving on the pavements and cars happily driving in bus lanes and up one-way streets

In Naples they are considered normal!





This is a city which values culture, with incredible vitality... and desire for change

real bargain, have bought a cheap radio or a mobile phone, only to find later that the box contains half a brick. Obviously, at this point it's no good trying to find the complaints department!

AN UNFORGETTABLE DESTINATION

Although an outsider may sometimes encounter hostility, the city can also be incredibly hospitable. You will be constantly amazed at the kindness and friendliness of its citizens. You are unlikely to meet many who can speak English, but Neapolitans have a knack of understanding and making themselves understood, using gestures and any other means available. These are the real, honest, Neapolitans, the majority, in contrast to the violence often exaggerated by politicians, artists and philosophers.

This is a city which values culture, with incredible vitality and a deep desire for change; a city which welcomes tourists and is weary of being subjected to the arrogant rule of criminals. Every day is a constant struggle simply to win and preserve a decent life.

This article is not intended to deter you from visiting Naples but rather to make you aware of certain pitfalls and how to avoid them. A true tourist cannot omit Naples from his itinerary. Everyone is familiar with the saying 'See Naples and die'. Of course this does not mean that on arrival in the city you will be murdered, but that having seen Naples there is nothing in the world you can see which is more beautiful, so you can die with satisfaction. **ITALY**

details

information

Azienda Autonoma di Soggiorno Cura e Turismo di Napoli
Piazza Plebiscito, 1 Tel: (+39) 081 2525720 - 5512701
E-mail: Info@Inaples.it www.inaples.it
 Region of Campania www.turismoregionecampania.it
 British Consulate - **Via dei Mille Tel: (+39) 081 4238911**
 See also: www.napoli.com/english
www.travelplan.it/naples_gulde.htm

GUIDES: www.city-sightseeing.it Piazza Matteotti 7
Tel: (+39) 081 5517279 www.napoli-guideturistiche.it
Tel: (+39) 081-5441832 - (+39) 081.8373209

how to get there

BY AIR: to Naples Capodichino Airport, the **CLP bus** to **Piazza Municipio**. Leaves every 30 minutes approx from In front of the arrivals hall **Tel: (+39) 081 5311706/7**

STATIONS: Central Station **Piazza Garibaldi**
 Mergellina Station seafront area
 Campi Flegrei Station Stadium and exhibition zone

food and wine

RECOMMENDED WINES:
Pallagrello bianco Le Sèrole www.terredelprincipale.com
 accompanies spaghetti ai frutti di mare.
Fiano di Avellino www.villaralano.it
 Goes well with gateau di patate.
Taurasi Salae domini www.cantinecaggiano.it
 Perfect with agnello al forno.

RESTAURANTS:
Ciro a Mergellina, via Mergellina 17/21, 80122 Napoli.
Tel: (+39) 081 681780 Fax: (+39) 081 667756
www.ciroamergellina.it
La Bersagliera, Borgo Marinaro 10/11, 80132 Napoli.
Tel: (+39) 081 7646016 Fax: (+39) 081 7649596
www.labersagliera.it
 See also website: www.ristoranapoli.it

WINE SHOPS:
Enoteca Mercadante, Corso Vittorio Emanuele, 14
Tel: (+39) 081 667293
Enoteca La Partenopea, Viale Augusto, 2
Vinarium, via Cappella Vecchia, 7

where to stay

Luxury hotels - www.prestige-hotels.it
Other hotels - www.travelplan.it/naples_hotels.htm

property market

Property prices in Naples, both rentals and sales, are among the highest in Europe.
 National estate agencies operating in the Naples area are:
Tecnocasa www.tecnocasa.it
Prendicasa www.prendicasa.it
Gambetti www.gabetti.it

