

COMPLETE DAILY

1. **ARAGONESE CASTLE OF BAIA AND ARCHEOLOGICAL MUSEUM OF PHLEGREAN FIELDS**
2. **ARCHEOLOGICAL PARK OF BAIA**
3. **BAIA SOMMERSA BY BOAT AND TEMPLE OF VENUS**
4. **SYBIL'S CAVE AND ACROPOLIS OF CUMA**

9.30 a.m. Departure from port of Baia

The itinerary starts with a visit to the Aragonese Castle of Baia. The construction of the fortress began in 1495, with other forts in the Kingdom of Naples, on the occasion of the imminent invasion by the King of France Charles VIII. The Castle of Baia was part of a defensive system that allowed to control the approach of enemy fleets and the landing of troops who could have attacked Naples with a flanking operation. In 1531 the Spanish Viceroy Pedro de Toledo restructured and radically enlarged the fortress and after the eruption of Monte Nuovo in 1538 the restoration work started and continued until 1550 with a complex of works that gave to the castle its current appearance.

In 1544 the Castle succeeded in repelling the attack of the Corsair Barbarossa after his raid carried out in Ischia with 150 vessels and 4 ships. The strategy of the men of the fortress was exemplary, they first brought enemy boats closer to the castle and then they sank them with the cannons that they had hidden in the fort on the beach. During the last world war, the fortress was occupied first by the Germans and then by the Allies. In 1984 it was handed over to the Archeological Superintendence of Naples for the construction of the Archeological Museum of the Campi Flegrei. The museum collects numerous and precious testimonies coming from the whole Phlegrean area exposed in multiple rooms. Particularly beautiful and evocative reconstructions with original

artifacts recovered from the submerged Roman city of the Imperial Nymphaeum of Epitaph peak in Baia and the Sacello degli Augustali of Miseno (currently closed to the public). Among the other exhibits there are the fragments of plaster casts of Baia that record the masterpieces of Greek statuary otherwise lost.

The itinerary continues with a visit to the Archeological Park called Roman Thermae of Baia, probably the largest and most majestic spa complex in ancient Italy, a spa town with sudatorium, swimming pools and viewpoint, and it was among the works that earned the imperial town of Baia, the name of "Pusilla Rome" (the small Rome). Seneca, obsessed and dazzled by the blazing and glowing life of Baia, describes it as the holiday boom and the sweet life, carousel of loves, adventures, follies and conspiracies, a place of pleasure and mourning. A contrast that lives in many poets, who praised the beauty and suggestion. Horace proclaimed it as "the gulf of Baia the most beautiful of the world" (Ep. I, 1, 83), for Propertius it was as the enemy of the castes girls and for Marziale it was as the golden beach of Venus. Women of Baia are part of the legend: Cinzia, Lesbia, Messalina, Levina, Poppea up to Fiammetta of Boccaccio in the Middle-Ages.

The great emperor Hadrian died here in the Summer of 138 A.D. Politicians and vips from civil society built their luxurious villas in Baia. The emperors like Caligola, Claudio, Domiziano, Alessandro Severo did the same ... in a forest of marble and bronzes, statues and columns, gold busts and frescoes among the green of the myrtles and the rarest plants. All of these were incorporated into the imperial Palatium (palace). Suggestive is the so-called "Temple of Mercury" with its bold dome, whose diameter is half compared to the Pantheon's one in Rome and the inner lake full of life. Undoubtedly to photograph, in the previous room, the curious fig upside down.

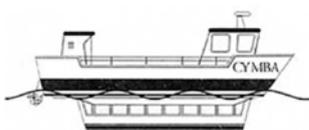
Lunch break

The tour continues with the boarding on the Cymba, a boat with a glass hull that will allow us to admire sitting under the sea level the remains of the "Imperial City of Baia", as in a large submerged museum. An evocative journey to discover the residences of Roman emperors and patricians, sunk into the sea about 2000 years ago, because of the bradyseism. From the Greek "bradiùs" (slow) and "seismòs" (moviment), bradyseism is a slow movement in the vertical direction, in contrast to the fast one of the earthquake, which varies from a few centimetres to few metres.

It is manifested by lifting and lowering connected to the evolution of this active volcanic area that produces an increase in temperature and pressure in depth, causing a swelling of the subsoil with consequent elevation. Instead, when the underlying energy decreases, the surface sinks slowly.

From the 2nd century after Christ, the level of ground begins to sink slowly into the sea so the streets, villas and buildings that were along the Phlegrean Coast are slowly submerged by the sea and today we can see the remains through the windows of the Cymba. The imperial city together with Portus Julius and Herculanea street, are part of a large submerged archeological area (six times Pompeii) which starts from Miseno and ends at the Gaiola of Naples.

Our tour finishes with a visit to the Temple of Venus, which is the lower part of the Thermal Baths of Baia and, although buried about six meters, it still preserves its majestic and beauty.



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Our itinerary finishes with a visit to the most famous and mysteriuos place of all the Phlegrean Fields: Cuma and the Sybil's Cave.

In the middle of the 8th century B.C. Greeks landed at our beaches after a short stop in Pithecuse (Ischia) and

founded Cuma, mother of the Phlegrean people and Naples. Cuma was the first polis, in other words the first organized State in the West with strong institutions and appropriate civil and military structures. Power and opulence were the basis of its fortune in Italy. With Greeks of Euboea arrived in the West: classical religion, the first temple (of Apollo) attributed to the legendary Daedalus, the craftsmanship, the industry, the gastronomy, the coinage, the worked gold, the fashion.

The greatest pride of Cuma is in having invented the Euboian-Latin alphabet and propagated it in the West and beyond, allowing to read the translations of songs and narrative of the Greek poets, who told about what happened at the dawn of the Mediterranean history, in the small city of Troy in the East, burnt and destroyed after ten years of war.

Through a tree-lined street we reach the famous Sybil's Cave. The legend tells that Sybil was a thousand-year-old fortune teller arrived in Cuma where she predicted near to the temple of Apollo. Virgil, reconnecting to the ancient tradition, entrusts to his vaticinii the premonitions about the future fate of Rome. According to beliefs, the Sybil announced the same birth of Christ. The Sybil of Cuma usually was used to write her responses on the leaves that the wind dispersed, penetrating through her cave, making it difficult to reconstruct it.

Although restored in Hellenistic and Roman times, actually the so-called Sybil's Cave doesn't connected to the original oracular cult of Apollo but it is a fortification of the city built during naval battles against Etruscans. It is possible to access through a long hallway (dromos) over 130 m. Trapezoidal shaped with a height of about 5 m. Continuing we arrive in the heart of the archeological park of Cuma.

Today, it is possible to admire various sites in the Park, including: the Temple of Apollo which, according to the story of Virgil in the Aeneid, was built by Daedalus after escaping from the labyrinth of Knossos and the Temple of Jupiter, located on the upper part of the Acropolis.

04:30 p.m. End of our services

△- To optimize the organization, we reserve the right to manage the sequence of visits at our discretion.

* In case of bad visibility of the seabed an alternative itinerary will be proposed.