

Located on Italy's Bay of Naples, Pompeii is an excavated city that takes visitors back 20 centuries to see how ordinary people lived until a horrific moment in 79 A.D., when the nearby volcano of Mount Vesuvius totally destroyed the town almost instantaneously with burning lava and ashes.



In addition to the beautifully restored architecture, sculpture and wall paintings, on display are amazing forms of people who were suddenly killed by the eruption. The volcano quickly covered them with boiling lava, and 2,000 years later, their agonized images resemble tragically realistic sculptures.

Pompeii is a harbor city just 32 miles along the Amalfi Coast from Naples, and strolling through it, visitors can get unique views of how everyday life was in the Roman town. In addition to several forums, where sports, speeches and festivals were held, many other locations are on display, including the marketplace (macellum), flour mill (pistrinum), corner tavern (thermopolium), and neighborhood cafe (cauporioe).

Many of the upper-class villas have also been restored, showing luxurious rooms and gardens,

large bathing pools and intricate painting and mosaic art on the walls. In one location, obviously a bordello, the wall paintings explicitly show the services offered there.

No visit to Italy can be complete without at least a day spent strolling along the stone-lined streets of ancient Pompeii. Just make sure you keep an eye on nearby Mount Vesuvius, which still sends up a continuous plume of warning smoke.