



Pompeii & Herculaneum

Antiquities of the Bay of Naples

2–8 February 2026 (MM 881)*

7 days

Lecturer: Dr Konogan Beaufay

13–18 April 2026 (MM 920)

6 days

Lecturer: Dr Mark Grahame

21–26 September 2026 (MM 179)

6 days

Lecturer: Dr Nigel Spivey

23–29 November 2026 (MM 235)*

7 days

Lecturer: Dr Mark Grahame

One of the most exciting tours possible dealing with Roman archaeology. A unique insight into everyday life in the Roman Empire.

Two principal sites, both buried by the eruption of Vesuvius in AD 79 and preserved with unparalleled completeness.

Important early Greek settlements, including Paestum, Cumae and Pozzuoli.

Campania's favourable climate, fertile soils and natural harbours were attractive to the Greeks looking to trade and for places to settle. They founded their earliest colony at Cumae and others soon followed with Naples and Paestum (Posidonia) among them. The prosperity enjoyed by the Greek colonies is best seen at Paestum where three of the most complete Doric temples anywhere still stand.

After falling under Roman dominion, Campania continued to prosper with wealth generated by agriculture and trade. Towns like Pompeii and Herculaneum thrived and wealthy Romans seeking to escape from the summer heat of Rome built villas along its coast.

Campania became an imperial playground with the emperor among the most famous and notorious of all villa owners on the Bay of Naples.

However, life on the Bay of Naples was struck by tragedy when Mount Vesuvius erupted in AD 79 and buried Pompeii and Herculaneum with volcanic ash. Paradoxically, this sudden obliteration preserved the towns with a level of completeness which has no parallel with any other archaeological site in the world.



Pompeii, watercolour by Frank Fox, publ. 1915

Excavation has revealed them almost in their entirety, providing a unique insight into everyday life in the Roman Empire. Even the smallest and most fragile objects of daily use have survived, along with wall paintings, floor mosaics, precious jewellery and household utensils. The immediacy and vividness with which the imagination is able to grasp a past civilization is startling and unique.

In the winter months this tour is based in Naples as the hotel in Vico Equense has seasonal opening only. We have allowed an extra day to visit some of the principal ancient sites of the city, including the church of San Lorenzo Maggiore and its subterranean excavations.

Itinerary

Day 1. In February 2026: fly at c. 9.00am from London Heathrow to Naples (British Airways). Drive to the Santa Lucia waterfront district of Naples, where all six nights are spent. **In April & September:** fly at c. 10.15am from London Heathrow to Naples (British Airways). Drive to the hotel in the hamlet of Seiano, above the town of Vico Equense, where all five nights are spent. **In November 2026:** fly at c. 2.00pm from London Heathrow to Naples (British Airways). Drive to the Santa Lucia waterfront district of Naples, where all six nights are spent.

Day 2: Paestum. Paestum was a major Greek

settlement and is one of the most interesting archaeological sites in Italy. Three outstanding Greek Doric temples stand in a remarkable state of preservation. Visit also the excellent museum which contains a very rare ancient Greek painted tomb and fascinating sculptured panels (metopes) of the sixth-century BC, among the earliest anywhere.

Day 3: Cumae, Baia, Pozzuoli. Spend the day around the Bay of Naples at some little-visited but fascinating sites. Cumae was the first Greek settlement on mainland Italy, and material from here and other sites visited during the tour can be seen in the archaeological museum of the Phlegraean fields in the spectacularly situated castle at Baia. The port of Pozzuoli has a well-preserved amphitheatre and market.

Day 4: Pompeii. Since its first exploration during the 18th century, ancient Pompeii has been one of the world's most famous archaeological excavations. The fascination of the site lies not only in the major public buildings such as the theatre, temples and the forum but also in the numerous domestic dwellings, from cramped apartments to luxurious houses with their mosaic pavements and gaudily frescoed walls.

Day 5: Herculaneum, Oplontis. At Herculaneum, buried by the first pyroclastic

Pompeii & Herculaneum continued

surge which was cooler, timber and other fragile artefacts that normally do not survive have been preserved by the unique conditions of burial. Less than a quarter of this town has been excavated, and in the part preserved the emphasis is on private dwellings and their decoration. Visit the lavish villa at Torre Annunziata (ancient Oplontis), which may have been the home of Poppaea, wife of Nero. It is one of the loveliest of ancient sites, with rich wall paintings, a replanted garden and a swimming pool.

Day 6: Naples. The Archaeological Museum in Naples has one of the finest collections in the world, and is the principal repository for both the small finds and the best-preserved mosaics and frescoes discovered at Pompeii and Herculaneum. *In February 2026:* fly from Naples to London Heathrow, arriving c. 2.30pm. *In April, September and November 2026:* fly from Naples to London Heathrow, arriving c. 9.15pm.

* **Day 7:** if joining the February or November departures of this tour Day 2 is spent familiarising in Naples. The tour then follows the sequence of visits listed above.

Lecturers

Dr Konogan Beaufay. Field archaeologist and researcher, Konogan obtained his PhD from the University of Oxford and went on to continue his research at the Centre for the Study of Classical Architecture, Cambridge. He is an expert in Roman architecture and the ways the Roman planned, built, and interacted with their urban environment; he has a particular interest in the history of ancient baths and bathing. An awardee of the British School of Rome, he has also conducted research at the Freie Universität in Berlin, while his archaeological endeavours have taken him to excavation sites across the Mediterranean and beyond, all the way to the Harappan and Inca worlds.

Dr Mark Grahame. Archaeologist, lecturer and Member of the Chartered Institute of Archaeologists (MCIfA). He obtained his PhD from Southampton University and his thesis on the spatial layouts of the houses of Roman Pompeii was published as a British Archaeological Report and a series of journal articles. He has coordinated an adult education programme in archaeology at the University of Southampton (2002–2011) and has taught

courses on the archaeology and history of the Roman Empire for Cambridge and Oxford Universities' Institutes of Continuing Education. He is currently the director of the heritage consultancy, M-Arc Heritage Ltd., a company which he founded in 2018.

Dr Nigel Spivey. Senior Lecturer in Classical Art and Archaeology at the University of Cambridge and Fellow of Emmanuel College. Among his publications are *Understanding Greek Sculpture*, *Greek Art*, *Enduring Creation*, *The Ancient Olympics* and *Classical Civilization: A History in Ten Chapters*. He presented the BBC2/PBS series *How Art Made the World*.

Practicalities

Included: travel by private coach, and some travel by train; hotel accommodation; breakfasts, 3 lunches and 3 dinners with wine, water, coffee; all admissions; all tips; all taxes; the services of the lecturer, tour manager and local guides where required.

Accommodation:

In February and November 2026: Grand Hotel Santa Lucia, Naples (www.santalucia.it): a 4-star hotel on the waterfront about 15 minutes on foot from Piazza Plebiscito, with spectacular views of Mount Vesuvius and the island of Capri. Rooms are all of a good size. Rooms with a sea view are available on request and for a supplement. *Single rooms are doubles for sole use.*

In April and September 2026: Grand Hotel Angiolieri (grandhotelangiolieri.it): modern 5-star hotel on the hill-top above the town of Vico Equense. Rooms with a sea view are available on request and for a supplement. *Single rooms are doubles for sole use.*

How strenuous? There is a lot of walking on this tour, some of it over rough ground on archaeological sites and there is a lot of standing in museums and on archaeological sites. Sure-footedness is essential. The day spent in Pompeii can be tiring. Average distance by coach per day: 33 miles (*February & November*), 70 miles (*April & October*).

Group size: between 10 and 22 participants.