

Italy Info #6

Cilento Coast (B)

Pisciotta, Palinuro, Cicerale,
Buffalo Mazzarella, Paestum



It is helpful to keep in mind that southern Italy was once an influential part of Ancient Greece.

Wed we tour the coastline. TH we visit the interior National Park and Fri we visit Paestum on our way back to Salerno.



17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	Memorial Day					

Pisciotta



Wednesday's first stop is Pisciotta, the birthplace of Alici di Menaica, a traditional fishing method where long sturdy nets are cast into the sea at sunset and retrieved at dawn.

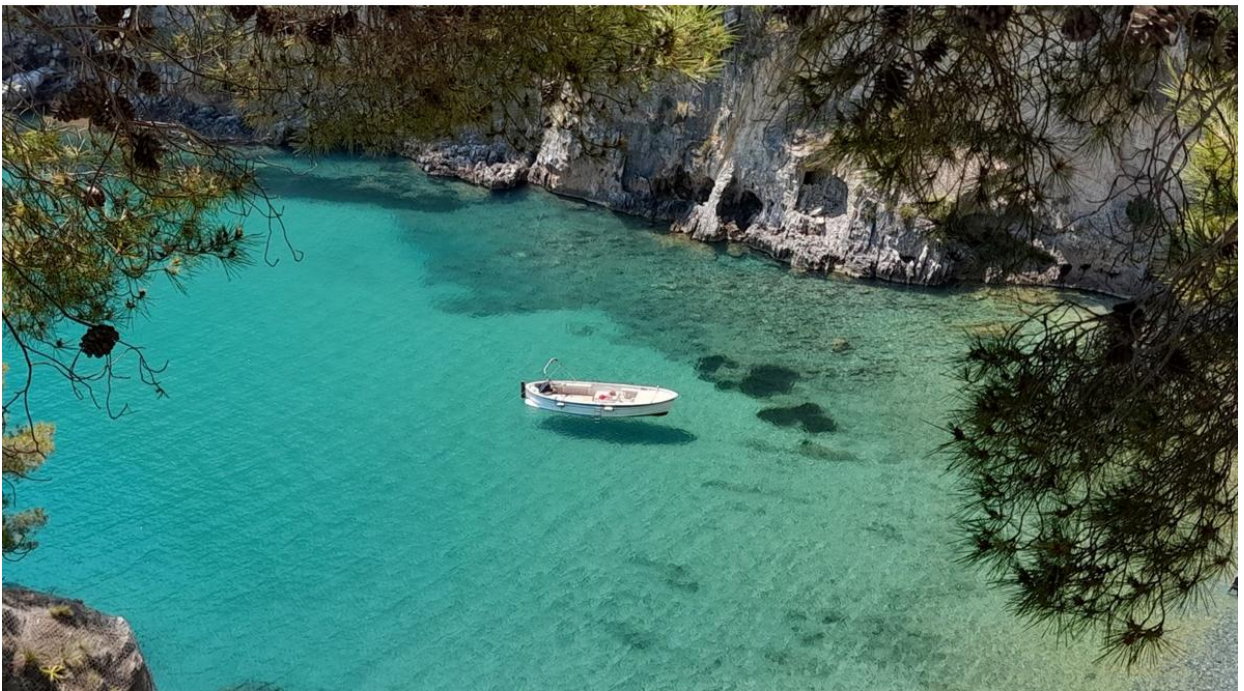


A local guide will walk us around Pisciotta's beautiful historical center. We will visit the market and select fresh authentic ingredients to take to a unique cellar kitchen where we will cook a delicious meal together and learn about the typical foods of the Cilento region.

Palinuro



In the afternoon we cruise along the Cilento coastline, visit a turquoise bay and a magical blue cave. There is time to swim off the boat.





Cilento National Park's Interior



Thursday, we meet Signora Giovanna, the ambassador of Cilento and the Mediterranean Diet, on her farm in Cilento National Park. She will lead us on a walk to collect wild herbs and teach us more about the Mediterranean Diet and its secrets for living a long life.

.



Giovanna is an excellent cook. After her workshop we will enjoy lunch savoring her local dishes highlighting chickpeas. The nearby village, Ceci, means chickpeas in Italian.





Friday, we return to Salerno. On the way we stop at the Tenuta Vannulo family farm and cheese factory. Cattle breeding and cheese production have been in this area since Ancient Greece times. Asian buffaloes were introduced by Normans in the 12th century. The prized mozzarella the buffaloes produce here is known as the “white gold” of Cilento.



This mozzarella is made by following strict traditional methods--techniques handed down from generation to generation, preserving its unique authenticity. We will watch them make the cheese through a window.



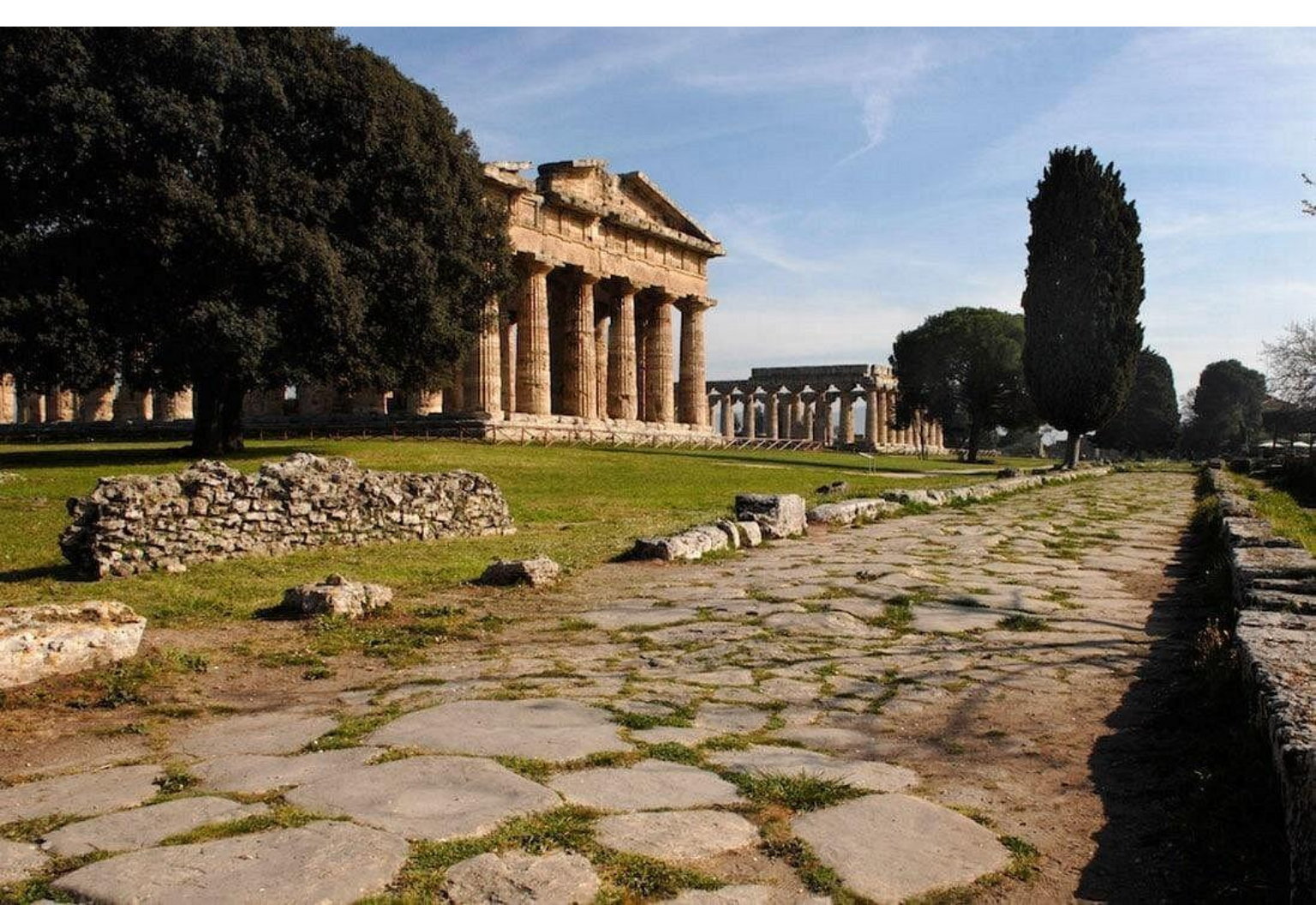




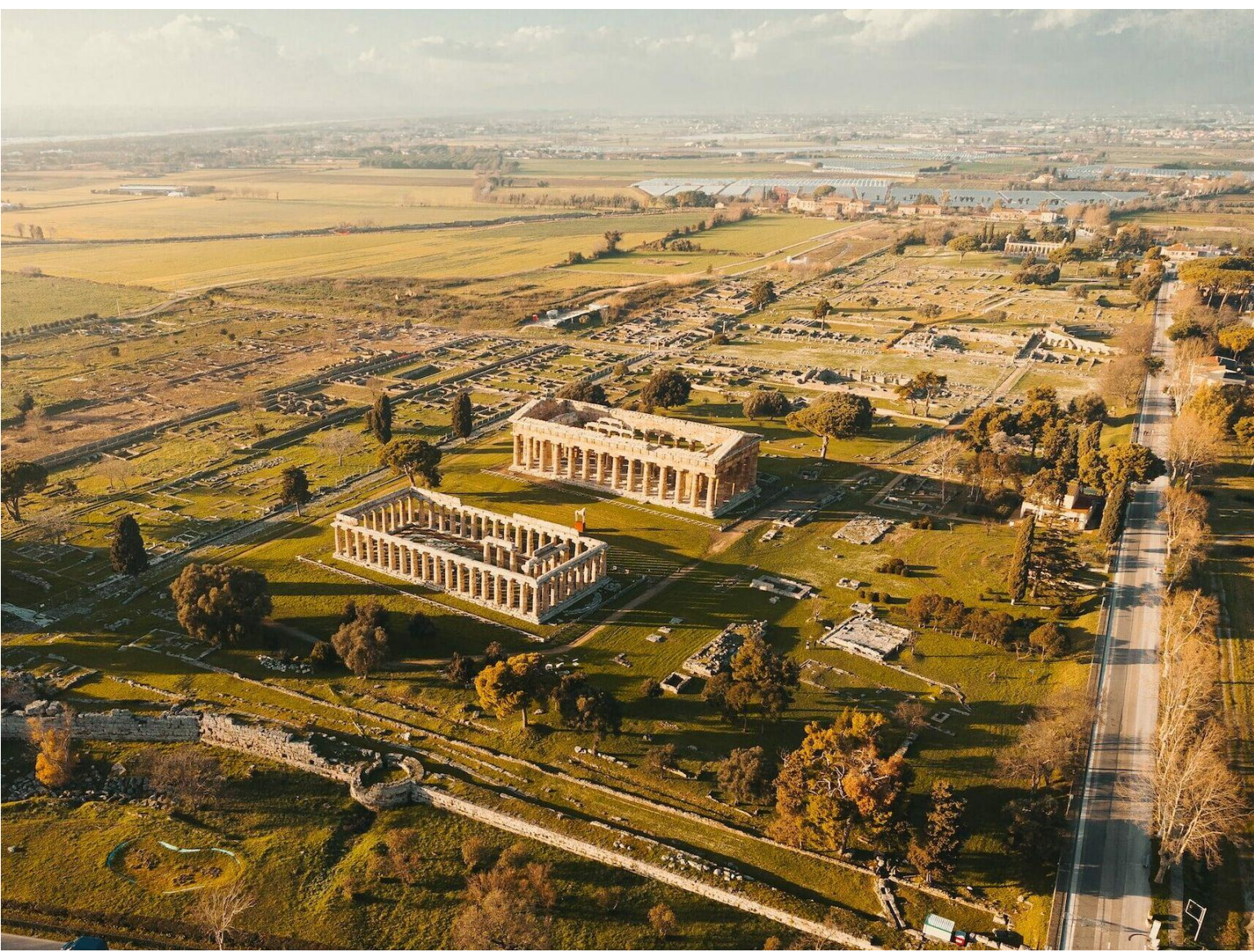
The farm visit includes sampling fresh mozzarella.

You can also buy a buffalo mozzarella gelato at the farm's shop.

Next stop...



Paestum, originally known as Posedionia, began around 600 BCE as a Greek colony and quickly grew in size and prominence, becoming a thriving trade center. In 273 ADE it became a Latin colony of the Roman Empire. Silting of the river, shifts in trade routes, flooding and malaria lead to its decline. It was abandoned by the end of the Roman era and was ignored until the 18th century.



Paestum contains 3 of the worlds best preserved Greek Temples, impressive defensive walls, a Roman forum, the basic remains of a Roman amphitheater, and a number of ancient tombs. A museum houses millennia-old frescoes, including the iconic Tomb of the Diver.





Temple of Hera I is the oldest Greek temple in Italy, built about 550-525 BCE, it still has all 50 columns standing. Hera was goddess of marriage, women, protector of women during childbirth, and wife of Zeus.

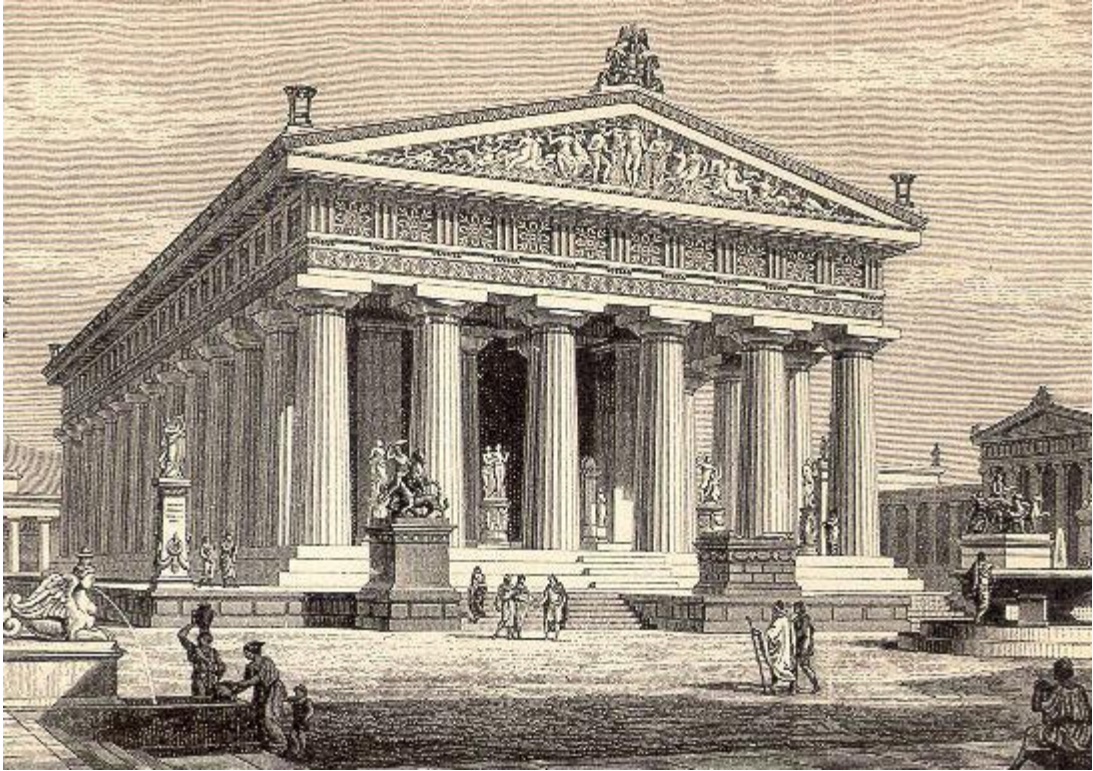
Temple of Hera II / Neptune was mistaken by early scholars to be the Temple of Neptune (Poseidon, god of sea, freshwater, earthquakes and horses) because of the city's original name, Posedionia.

.



Backside views of the temples





Hera II / Neptune was built around 460-450 BCE, right at the height of Greek influence in southern Italy, so it predates the Parthenon in Athens.

Hera II was built to align with a double-peaked mountain that was considered sacred by the Greeks.





Hera II may have also been used to worship Zeus. On its eastern side there are two alters once used to worship.

The Temple of Athena / Ceres



Paestum's third temple was first attributed to Ceres (goddess of agriculture, grain and fertility), but scholars later determined it was dedicated to Athena (goddess of wisdom, warfare and crafts). It was built around 500 BC with a simpler design than the other two Paestum temples, It once housed a huge statue of Athena and in late antiquity it was used as a Christian church.