

WHV - Archaeological Park of Herculaneum

Archaeological Areas of Pompei, Herculaneum and Torre Annunziata, Italy

Cultural property inscribed on the World Heritage since 1997

31/08/2019–14/09/2019



Situated at the foot of Mount Vesuvius and just four miles south of Naples, Herculaneum was once a bustling seaside resort and trading port town. The archaeological area of Herculaneum is considerably smaller than its neighbour Pompeii, but in many ways is a unique place to visit. In fact, while roofs in Pompeii collapsed under the weight of falling ash, only a few centimetres of ash fell on Herculaneum, causing little damage. Subsequently, there was a succession of six pyroclastic flows (a mixture of ash and gases), which then solidified. The good state of preservation of the site is due to its rapid filling by these flows, which prevented the buildings from collapsing. As a consequence, at Herculaneum there are many well-preserved buildings, several with the upper stories still intact, and some excellent frescoes and mosaics on both walls and floors to be seen. The pyroclastic flows of high temperature at once carbonized and exceptionally preserved organic matter, giving back to us a unique complex of common everyday objects such as textiles, foodstuffs, wooden furniture, architectural elements, and the hull of a sizable boat. Thus, Herculaneum really gives you an idea of how ancient Romans lived, that is only with difficulty achieved in other centres of the ancient world.

Project objectives:

The project works to share knowledge about the cultural heritage of the Herculaneum area between the local community and people from all over the world. It aims to make volunteers active players in the site's preservation and aims to raise awareness about the conservation of cultural heritage. Furthermore, it aims to expand intercultural learning between volunteers and local community and promote the site internationally.

Project activities:

Volunteers will work in hospitality and conservation at ancient Herculaneum, welcoming visitors and giving information about the site. They will support the keepers in the daily activities, and work on maintenance and cleaning activities (e.g. removing grass alongside road and pavements). At Villa dei Papiri frescos, a frescos painting workshop will be held and a visit will be made to the Villa dei Papiri excavations. Volunteers will study the practice of how to make a fresco, learning traditional, practical skills. At the Antiquarium of the Archaeological Park, volunteers will work on managing visitor flows and reception.

Partners: Vesuvius National Park, Ercolano and Portici Municipality, Youth Action for Peace Italy, Pro Loco Herculaneum Association.