

History

The name Ercolano derives from the legendary foundation of the city by Ercole, attracted by the beauties of the places.

It was probably founded by the Osci in the XVIII century. B.C. to subsequently pass under the Etruscans, Greeks, Samnites and Romans dominations (307 B.C.) Thanks to the amenity of the place and the climate, the city became one of the most beautiful residential places of the Roman patricians, which here built awesome villas including the villa of L. Calpurnio Pisone (Villa dei Papiri), one of the largest of antiquity , cenacle of European philosophers and scholars.

The terrible eruption of Vesuvius on August 24th, 79 D.C. in a few hours buried the city.

In Ercolano there is a sanctuary, built in XI century, the oldest of the Vesuvius area. Pontifical basilica since the 16th century, dedicated to the Madonna that was among the most popular pilgrimage destinations in Campania, object of numerous Roman Pontifical indulgences, as well as donations and bequests from the Neapolitan nobility.

In 1709 the first discovery of the buried city took place but the systematic excavations began thirty years later thanks to the will of Charles III of Bourbon, who also built a residence near the excavations, the Palace of Portici. Around it, the great families of the Neapolitan nobility created beautiful villas and palaces. For their splendor, the road that bordered them gained the nickname of "Golden Mile".

The wonders that emerged from the excavations and the fascination exercised by Vesuvius made the city a destination for scholars, scholars and rich tourists who included it into the European Grand Tour.