

THE 5 TERRE AND LEVANTO

Accessible by train from La Spezia, with services ranging from a few minutes up to half an hour, and by ferry from La Spezia, Lerici and Porto Venere, the Cinque Terre is a National Park and UNESCO World Heritage Site. The territory of this protected area is the result of a centuries-old relationship between man and nature, which led to the development of villages perched along the sea and the surrounding terraces created through the construction of dry stone walls. The viticulture that abounds on these steep lands has always been a difficult practice, but one that produces excellent wine famous the world over.



RIOMAGGIORE

The colorful facades of the houses wind along a stream from the hills down to the sea, creating unique views from its twisting alleys, doorways, and archways, all the way to the steep cliffs lapped by a crystal clear turquoise sea. In the main square sits the Church of Saint John the Baptist, built in 1340, and further up the hill lays the square-shaped Castle of Riomaggiore, with two circular towers and a large terrace that overlooks the village and the sea below.



MANAROLA

Manarola looks like a strip of colored houses that seem to arise naturally from the rocks. In the main square stands the Church of San Lorenzo, built during the first half of the fourteenth century, characterized by a sandstone facade enriched by a magnificent rose window in white marble, and with three naves in the interior. The characteristic murals that decorate the walls of Riomaggiore and Manarola are works of the Argentine artist Silvio Benedetto and dedicated to the laborious work of the local farmers and fishermen.



CORNIGLIA

Built on top of a bluff overlooking the sea, Corniglia can be reached from the railway station by a staircase composed of 377 steps. It is surrounded by vineyards and cultivated terraces. The Church of San Pietro, built in 1334, is in Ligurian Gothic style, with the façade decorated with a white marble rose window and hanging arches.



VERNAZZA

This village is centered around a charming little cove, upon which sits the fourteenth century church, dedicated to Saint Margaret of Antioch, built in Ligurian Gothic style. High above the town you will find the Doria Castle, built in the eleventh century overlooking the village below.



MONTEROSSO

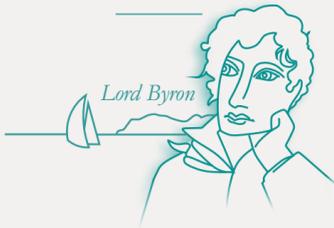
Monterosso is the northern-most village of the Cinque Terre and is the only one with a sandy shoreline that connects Fegina, the twentieth century part of the village, to the old historic center. You can admire the sixteenth-century Aurora Tower, the Church of St. John the Baptist built in the late thirteenth century, the Capuchin Friars' Convent that sits on the hill between the two sides of the village, and many other points of interest as this is also the largest of the five villages. Monterosso offers sandy beaches equipped for bathing, including the famous "Giant's Beach", aptly named for the grandiose concrete statue depicting Neptune, which dominates the area.



LEVANTO

Nestled in the middle of a picturesque valley that forms a beautiful natural environment characterized by the surrounding green forest, olive trees and grape vines. The Gulf of Levanto, bordered on the south by the point of Punta Mesco, offers a long coastline of beaches and is one of the only areas with ideal surfing conditions, a result of different types of sea beds and the presence of offshore winds.

THE GULF OF POETS



The Gulf of Poets is famous worldwide. Baptized with this name in 1910 by the playwright Sem Benelli, who worked on his masterpiece «The Jester's Supper» in San Terenzo. The name meant to emphasize the fact that over the centuries many writers and artists have resided here and have drawn inspiration by the beautiful area: the writer D.H. Lawrence, the writer and painter George Sand, the poet George Byron, the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley, and many others. In the center of the Gulf lies the capital of La Spezia, while the two points are composed of the villages of Porto Venere and its three islands to the west, and Lerici and its imposing castle to the east.



LERICI

Bordering the eastern side of the Gulf of Poets and already known as a port (Erycis portus) in the second century A.D., the village of Lerici was involved during the medieval times in the fight between Pisa and Genoa where its castle played an important role. St. George's Castle, built in the twelfth century on a rocky promontory, composed of its tower, the rectangular body of the middle floor and the outer walls, is considered one of the most majestic and monumental fortifications of Liguria and is currently home to the Natural History Museum, created following the discovery of dinosaur footprints on the surrounding grounds. You can also visit the seventeenth-century Church of Saint Francis and the Oratory of San Rocco, in existence since the thirteenth century, and admire the historic houses including Ca' Doria, home of the famous admiral Andrea Doria of the Genovese Republic. Full of bars, restaurants, and shops, Lerici offers a pleasant and worldly experience.



LA SPEZIA

Located at the heart of the Gulf, La Spezia was founded as a medieval fishing village, enclosed by walls and fortified by the monumental Castle of St. George built in the thirteenth century. The city underwent a radical urban change as recent as the 1800's during the construction of the military arsenal called for by Cavour. Today it is a modern provincial capital whose main activities revolve around its position on the sea, including the cargo port and shipyards, the naval base, and the recent cruise terminal. Within the last decade, La Spezia has developed an articulated cultural offering thanks to its rich museum system. The first Sunday in August hosts the famous Palio del Golfo, a rowing competition between the thirteen villages of the Gulf which has taken place every year since 1925.

TO VISIT IN THE CITY

Civic Archeological Museum "U. Formentini"

Located inside the Castle of St. George, this museum houses artifacts and documentation of the territory from the Prehistoric Era to the Middle Ages. Of particular interest is the core of the stellar statues of Lunigiana (from the fourth millennium B.C.).

Civic Museum "Amedeo Lia"

Divided into thirteen rooms, this museum is the result of a generous donation from the private citizen Amedeo Lia. It houses a rich collection of paintings ranging from the thirteenth to the eighteenth century, a section devoted to miniatures, sculptures and objects of art.

Museum of Seals

Also a result of a donation, that of the Capellini's, this museum offers a vast collection of about 1,500 seals from around the world that covers a time span from the fourth millennium BC to the contemporary period.

Diocesan Museum

Found within the old Oratory of St. Bernard, this museum offers a glimpse of works of religious art and documents that accompany the life of the diocese from the Middle Ages until today.

Ethnographic Museum "G. Podenzana"

This museum presents a synthesis of the popular culture of the area, in particular of Lunigiana, from the eighteenth century to the early twentieth century, with finds concerning popular devotion, superstition, peasant culture, daily life, and traditional costumes.

CAMeC

Modern and Contemporary Art Center

Here you will find the permanent public collections of modern and contemporary art, especially the works collected from the Gulf Prize, started in 1933. It is known for its constant promotion of contemporary art events.

Technical Naval Museum

Housed at the entrance of the Arsenal, this museum is dedicated to the art and the history of the Navy, exhibiting models, figureheads, maps, documents, and photographs, from the origins of navigation to date.



SAN TERENCE

Continuing the walk from Lerici along the sea, you reach the small village of San Terenzo, defended by a small, square fort built on the hill overlooking the sea and the village. On the waterfront you can visit the baroque church dedicated to the Nativity of the Virgin Mary and the white Villa Magni, known for hosting the English poet Percy Bysshe Shelley, who found his death in a shipwreck with his boat upon return from the nearby Livorno. The village also has a wide beach and a long rocky breakwater.

FIASCHERINO

Close to Lerici you will find the village of Fiascherino, with beautiful beaches, hotels, restaurants, clubs and where you can admire the beautiful sea-facing villas surrounded by large parks, one of which was inhabited by the writer Mario Soldati.

CASTELNUOVO MAGRA

Towering over the plains of the Magra River, this medieval village is located on Mount Bastion and enjoys a splendid panoramic view of the Gulf of Poets. The old town is rich in history and works of art. The impressive Renaissance façade of the Oratory of the Whites signals the birth of the village, within which you can find the late Renaissance church of St. Mary Magdalena, with three aisles divided by 12 columns made of Carrara marble. In 1306 the great poet Dante Alighieri drew up the famous "Peace" between the whole Ghibelline branch of the Malaspina and the bishop of Luni, marking the end of the temporal power of the Church in Lunigiana. The surrounding area is characterized by extensive vineyards and olive trees and the presence of many farms where you can taste and buy the excellent products of the Magra Valley.

FOSDINOVO

In the rolling hills of the Magra Valley you will find Fosdinovo, which was born in 1340 from the feud of the Malaspina, who built the imposing castle that welcomes visitors at the entrance to the village. Every July Fosdinovo has a Medieval Festival, highlighting the magical atmosphere of the village that brings us back to Malaspina with shows, performances of historical groups and the tasting of typical Lunigiana products.

Marola

It is the second town you come across when traveling from the capital of La Spezia towards Porto Venere, following the road built by Napoleon Bonaparte in order to join a series of military batteries along that part of the Gulf of La Spezia.

Campiglia

Campiglia is located at an altitude of about 400 meters. It is a small village located on the western ridge of the promontory of the Gulf, whose west side consists of the famous terraces of Tramonti, extending all the way down to the sea. The village is a part of the Cinque Terre National Park, which borders with the Porto Venere Regional Park. Campiglia is particularly renowned for its cultivation of saffron and the famous Monesteroli staircase.



TELLARO

Tellaro is a typical Ligurian village, with houses decorated in colors ranging from yellow to green, from pink, to red, and built on a rocky coastline that drops down the hill to the sea. When in Tellaro, it is worth a visit to the Oratory of St. Mary in Selàa and the Church of St. George, from whose bell tower, according to legend, the "bell-ringer octopus" clung to the rope and rang the bells waking up the residents and saving them from the attack of the Saracens. The small landing along the sea welcomes the locals' fishing boats that still use the traditional nets or poles, as well as the pier for ferries connecting with Lerici. The first Sunday in August hosts the Sagra del Polpo, or festival of the octopus, where you can find this delicacy cooked according to the traditional recipes of the village.

VERSILIA AND THE APUAN ALPS

A stone's throw from the sea, the Apuan Alps are a paradise for lovers of nature and hiking, during both summer and winter months, and offer the possibility to stay overnight in comfortable lodges. In the heart of these mountains lie the spectacular white marble quarries that open like a lunar vision before the eyes of their visitors entering into the heart of the mountain. Here you can touch the precious stone material favored by artists such as Michelangelo and Canova.

MASSA-CARRARA

The province of Massa-Carrara, on the border of Liguria and Emilia Romagna, offers a vast coastal area characterized by a long sandy beach, rich in accommodations and modern beach establishments.

FORTE DEI MARMI

The jewel of Versilia, Forte dei Marmi is a popular seaside resort known and appreciated for its elegance, beautiful beaches and its famous evening gatherings.

VIAREGGIO

It is known not only as a seaside resort, but also for the Carnival of Viareggio, started in 1873, with its majestic papier-mâché floats that parade along the "Promenade". The official mask of the Carnival of Viareggio is Burlamacco.

PIETRASANTA

Pietrasanta is a renowned art town of medieval origin, appreciated for its open-air exhibitions, art galleries and contemporary boutiques and shops. Splendid noble palaces and the main historical monuments of the city overlook the Piazza Duomo of Pietrasanta. For the best panoramic point, visit the Rocca di Sala, a fortified complex of great historical and cultural importance.



A LOVELY PLACE



PORTO VENERE AND THE 5 TERRE



NATURAL PARK OF PORTO VENERE

The natural park, which includes the town of Porto Venere along with the islands of Palmaria, Tino and Tinetto, was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site and covers an area of about 160 acres.



5 TERRE NATIONAL PARK

The National Park of the Cinque Terre, a part of UNESCO's list of world heritage, environmental and cultural sites, features characteristics that make it a unique territory to admire and enjoy. Some of these attractions include the sharp cliffs overlooking the sea, small hidden coves, crystal clear waters, the scattered villages composed of colored houses, and the pristine natural sanctuaries. Laced along the hills are the ancient terraces created by characteristic dry stone walls typical of the area and used for wine cultivation. Scenic trails run along these terraces following the sea and the sloping hills.



PARK OF MONTEMARCELLO

From the top of the Caprione promontory, the Park of Montemarcello is surrounded by Mediterranean vegetation, breathtaking views of the Gulf of La Spezia to the west, and the fertile plain of the Magra river to the east. The territory within the Park of Montemarcello offers a variety of different environments: the river area alternates crops and wetlands where waterfowl nest in the valley, there are dominant historical centers and castles, as well as ancient water mills, and finally, the coastline features beautiful beaches and high cliffs. It offers long bicycle paths along the river and the chance to enjoy snorkeling, diving, and kayaking.



APIUAN ALPS REGIONAL PARK

The Apuan Alps are one of the most scenic and recognizable mountainous areas of the Italian peninsula, and add to the richness of the environments and landscapes that they guard. The Apuan are known throughout the world for the beauty of its marble and other decorative and building stones such as Cipollino, Breccia, and Cardoso. In the stretch of a few kilometers, starting from the short coastal plain of Versilia, the Apuan Alps rise to nearly two thousand meters above sea level with Mount Pisanino (m. 1,947). The Apuan Alps Regional Park has a dense network of trails, marked and well-maintained by the CAI (Italian Alpine Club).



Via Giuseppe Garibaldi, 5
19025 Portovenere (SP)
ITALY

Tel +39 0187 777 751

portoveneregrand.com



ARCHIPELAGO OF PORTO VENERE

PALMARIA ISLAND
Accessible by ferry from La Spezia and Porto Venere, the island offers an organized beach facility where, in addition to relaxing and soaking in the sun, you can rent kayaks and explore the numerous coves and caves, and many other small beaches that Palmaria has to offer. There is also a network of paths that allows hikers to circumnavigate the entire island in about three hours, enjoying the spectacular views from its high cliffs.

ISLAND OF TINO
The island of Tino is an active military garrison and the public is only allowed to visit once a year, on September 13. This date marks the festival of the patron saint of the island, San Venerio, who lived here and to whom the Benedictine monks dedicated the monastery after his death. Tradition has it that San Venerio signaled the presence of the island with large bonfires to mariners during dark nights, which is why to this date a large lighthouse, activated in 1884, is running on top of the island.

TINETTO
The third of the islands, Tinetto, only slightly larger than a rock, offers fascinating underwater features and a variety of fish that swim among them, constituting one of the favorite dive sites of divers from all over the world.



TREKKING

PALMARIA ISLAND
Trail n. 510 (island loop)
6 km. 190 m. Moderate 3 h

PORTO VENERE - CAMPIGLIA
Trail AV5T
4,7 km. 450 m. Moderate 2 h 45 min.

TELEGRAFO - MONTEROSSO
Trail SVA
16 km. 460 m. Moderate 6 h 20 min.

VERNAZZA - MONTEROSSO
Trail n. 508 - 582 - 591 - 509
9 km. 540 m. Moderate 4 h

LEGEND
distance
elevation
difficulty
time

FERRY LINES
PORTOVENERE - LERICI: 40 MIN.
PORTOVENERE - LA SPEZIA: 30 MIN.
PORTOVENERE - RIOMAGGIORE: 35 MIN.
PORTOVENERE - MONTEROSSO: 1 H 20 MIN.

TRAIN
INSIDE ROAD
HIGHWAY ROAD

PORTO VENERE

Declared a World Heritage site in 1997 and a Regional Natural Park in 2001, the territory of Porto Venere, along with the islands of Palmaria, Tino and Tinetto, the coastal strip up to Albano Valley and the Protected Marine Area that includes the Posidonia present in the Porto Venere channel, constitutes a context of unique natural environments, landscapes, and culture that are extremely valuable. Along the Calata Doria, the village of Porto Venere showcases the extraordinary facades of the colorful tower-like houses that make it unique, nestled among which are two arched stairways that lead up to the narrow stone streets of the village. On August 17 of each year, Porto Venere celebrates the Festival of the White Virgin, or "Madonna Bianca", a religious event in which Roman luminaries and torches make the village extremely striking.

LE GRAZIE
Along the road that links Porto Venere to La Spezia and built on the path that Napoleon created in the 1800s when he envisioned constructing a large military arsenal coastline, lies the town of Le Grazie. Overlooking a beautiful bay, this village features a marina for recreational boating and the production sites of ancient traditions, as well as a small beach for bathers. The archaeological area of the Roman Villa del Varignano surrounded by olive trees, has rooms decorated with mosaics and the remains of the oldest oil mill in Liguria.

FEZZANO
A small fishing village located in a cove on the western side of the Gulf of La Spezia, at the base of Mount Castellana.



PORTO VENERE

TOURIST ITINERARY: A GUIDED TOUR OF THE OLD TOWN

- 1 The village entrance: The roman gateway leads you through the main walls built in 1160, where there are clear signs of when the archway has fallen twice in succession. Upon entering, above the gateway lies the inscription "Colonia lanu-ensis 1113". On the ground to the left, you can see three marble basins of uncertain origin used to measure fixed quantities of grain and wine respectively. On the wall overhead you will see Porto Venere's historic emblem.
- 2 The Capitulum Tower: It stands to the left of the entrance to Via Capellini. Its walls are faced with beautiful ashlar-worked stone, enriched by slightly blunted quoins, or cornerstones. The first few floors are enhanced by mullioned windows that wind up along the stairway.
- 3 1494 Fresco: Above the inside of the gateway is a 15th century fresco of the "Madonna Bianca" (White Virgin), patron saint of the village, enclosed in a large niche.
- 4 "Carugio" or Via Capellini: The main street of the village represents a typical relic from the past.
- 5 The Steps: to the right when entering the carugio you will see the base of the "Climb to the Castle".
- 6 The Capitulo: On the left hand side as you are following along the carugio there are two arched flights of steps, called the 1st and 2nd "Capitulo" or chapters. In the past these flights of steps were the only access down to the rocks that surrounded the fortified walls and village within. Nowadays they lead down to the "Calata".
- 7 Piazza P. Centinaro: Half way up the carugio is a pretty little square named after P. Centinaro, a local benefactor. The fountain placed over the public well was built by the Genoese to collect rainwater off the nearby roofs.
- 8 Piazza L. Spallanzani: The center of the early-roman establishment of the "Castrum Vetus", the square is presently named after the biologist and naturalist L. Spallanzani (1729-1799), who spent a lot of time in Porto Venere around 1783. During his stay he carefully examined and furthered his studies on the formation of strata in the local territory.
- 9 The Church of Saint Peter: According to some archaeologists, this church stands on the ruins of an ancient pagan temple dedicated to Venus, from which the name Porto Venere derives. The temple was then transformed during the first years of Christianity into a Christian temple.
- 10 The Church of San Lorenzo: Its Romanesque facade was built by the famous Magistri Antelami between 1116 and 1130. Over 868 years after its opening, the church has maintained its ancestral structure of a nave and two aisles. The round archways are supported by columns in black stone, some of which were reinforced in 1582 by columns in white Carrara marble.
- 11 The Castle: Built by the Genoese in 1161. The main body of the upper castle, with its monumental gateway that leads to the surrounding ramparts and the grand "ipostila", or pillared hall, was built to a rectangular plan and belongs to the period of reconstruction in 1458.