



*Independent walking tour (CIN4)*

# Cinque Terre, Portovenere & the Portofino Peninsula

*Walking between coloured fishing villages and terraced vineyards*



## TRIP NOTES

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## INTRODUCTION

*This tour shows you the best parts of Liguria, a beautiful coastal region in Northern Italy. It is protected from the northern winds by a continuous protective backbone of high mountains, from the peaks of the Maritime Alps to the Apennines. That's why Liguria is famed for its exceptionally mild weather all year round and why it is the perfect place, despite the uneven terrain, for the flourishing of lush flora including the typical shrubs of the Mediterranean maquis, and also the tall trees that are a typical feature of Alpine flora.*

*Liguria's capital city Genova, also known as 'La Superba' has ruled the Mediterranean for centuries, but for hikers the area is most known because of the stunning Cinque Terre. The area of the 'Cinque Terre' gets its name from the five picturesque villages of Monterosso, Vernazza, Corniglia, Manarola and Riomaggiore. The area, now a major National Park, is a unique part of Italy. For over a thousand years people have lived in this dramatic landscape, slowly altering its features and cultivating the steep hillsides that lead down to rocky shores. An extensive network of ancient mule tracks – which today can be used as footpaths – takes you through an extraordinary landscape of terraces, built by hand with stones and earth.*

*But the region of Liguria has more to offer, like the small town of Portovenere, the romantic gate to 'Gulf of Poets', where you can stroll through its colourful streets and make a roundwalk on the wonderful island of Palmaria just in front of the village. And there is the lively historical resort town of Levanto, with a charming medieval town centre and a broad sandy beach.*

*And of course there is also the famed Peninsula of Portofino, known not only for the colourful Portofino itself, the resort for the Italian jetset, but also for the abbey of San Fruttuoso, located in an isolated inlet of this beautiful coastline, and wonderful Camogli, the city of the 1000 sailing ships. Walking here is an unforgettable experience!*

*This tour includes all these highlights: through the extensive footpath network of the area you walk from village to village, between forest and vineyards, through a spectacular terraced landscape overlooking the sea. You have also the time to visit the historic towns of Levanto, Portovenere, beautiful Camogli, Santa Margherita Ligure and picturesque Portofino. And of course, the five charming villages which make up the 'Cinque Terre', little gems of colourful houses in a green landscape.*



*Please note: this is a moderately easy tour, suitable for those who have some experience with walking and a good general physical condition. Most of the walks are on good paths, mostly well waymarked. Elsewhere it is necessary to follow the route notes provided together with the maps. Average walking times: approx from 5 to 6 hours each day.*



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## DAY-TO-DAY PROGRAMME

### Day 1 – Arrival in Levanto

Arrival in Levanto. After settling in at your hotel there is time for a short visit to the town centre and maybe a swim to wash off the weariness of the journey.

**Accommodation: Levanto - Hotel \*\*\***

*Total walking time: around 1 h. + sightseeing time*

### Day 2 – From Levanto along the Cape of Punta Mesco

The first day walk takes you along the coast to Monterosso al Mare. The first part of the walk leads up towards Punta Mesco, the most notable promontory in the region. This is a good spot to stop at for a picnic lunch. Just short of the headland you can make a small detour to the ruins of an old 11<sup>th</sup>-century hermitage and the nearby 'semaforo', where you will enjoy marvellous views of the rugged coastline. Then you follow a fairly steep path down into Monterosso, a colourful village with blue, red & yellow houses that cluster behind the beachfront. There is then time to explore the town before taking the local train back to Levanto. For those who feel like it there is also the option of walking back from here, following a more inland forested path, which brings you back over the ridge behind the castle of Levanto.

**Accommodation: Levanto - Hotel \*\*\***

*Total walking distance: 5 km. Approx. walking time: 3 h. Ascent & descent: +/- 350 m.*

### Optional Extra Day – To the Coast West of Levanto

*Today you walk in a western direction. The first part of the walk goes along the beach, then the path goes up into the nearby hills and down to the little seaside village of Bonassola. Through the seaside hills you then walk towards the small 'village' of Framura, an aggregation of scattered hamlets. From Costa, the highest hamlet, an almost level path contours the hillside, with nice views over the sea. A steep descent brings you down to the next resort, Deiva Marina (with the option of continuing to Moneglia or even Sestri Levante). This walk along the coast brings you through several charming little villages, where you have the time to grab a coffee, have lunch or just relax. You can take the train back to Levanto from any of the villages on the way, in case you want to shorten the walk.*

**Hotel \*\*\* - Levanto**

*Distance: 16 km. Approx. walking time: 6 h. Ascent & descent: +/- 700 m.*

### Day 3 – The “Sentiero dell’Amore” & the Cinque Terre coastal path

A short train ride brings you to Riomaggiore, the most southerly of the five villages. From there you start the most 'classical' of all walks in the Cinque Terre: the coastal path linking all five villages together. First you walk a short stretch along the famous 'Sentiero dell'Amore' ('Lover's Walk'). Then you head for Manarola, an attractive little village with steep multi-coloured houses overlooking a rocky port. From here you hike up to the rural hamlet of Volastra, before descending back to Corniglia, perched on a ridge overlooking the sea, in the midst of stunning terraced vineyards, with awesome views over the whole area. Take your time to look around in Corniglia and then continue through terraced vineyards and the occasional citrus grove. As you approach Vernazza, dominated by its old fortress, you enjoy some of the best views in the region, before a fairly steep descent brings you into the village itself. In Vernazza, arguably the prettiest of all the villages, you can climb the castle tower for a stunning view of the port with its brightly painted boats, and there are numerous cafés and bars where you can enjoy a drink before taking the train back to Levanto. In case you still have some energy, you could continue the walk to Monterosso, to approach this village also from the other side, before taking the train back to Levanto.

**Accommodation: Levanto - Hotel \*\*\***

*Total walking distance: 15 km. Approx. walking time: 6 h. Ascent & descent: +/- 450 m. (longer options available)*



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### Day 4 – From Riomaggiore to Portovenere

From Riomaggiore you walk in eastern direction today, heading for Portovenere. You first hike up a long flight of stairs to the 'Santuario della Madonna di Montenero' (optional bus). Continuing uphill you begin contouring along the coastal cliffs, through terraced vineyards, enjoying wonderful views of the coastline framed by clear blue waters. You pass through the little hamlet of Campiglia where you can stop for some refreshment. Walking down into the pine forest, the track narrows as you continue towards Portovenere with further spectacular views. Arriving at the 16th century castle above the village, you may be able to see the distant peaks of the Alpi Apuane before a long staircase takes us into the heart of the village. There is plenty of time to visit the charming village and Punta San Pietro, before settling in your hotel overlooking the Gulf of the Poets.

**Accommodation: Portovenere – Hotel \*\*\***

*Total walking distance: 13 km. Approx. walking time: 5,5 h. Ascent & descent: +/- 650 m.*

### Day 5 – Round walk over the Island of Palmaria

After the longer walk yesterday, today you'll have some time to recover. There is the possibility of making an easy roundwalk over the island of Palmaria, just across the bay from Portovenere. By boat you make the short crossing and then you'll have the whole day to discover the beauty of this very Mediterranean island, immersed in the dense vegetation, overlooking the cliffs with just the seagulls and azure sky above you. Take some time to discover the impressive fortresses too and perhaps go for a swim on one of the remote beaches. Upon returning by boat to the mainland you still have time to visit the charming village of Portovenere itself and choose the restaurant for your final supper in the harbour of Venus.

**Accommodation: Portovenere - Hotel \*\*\***

*Total walking distance: 5-6 km. Approx. walking time: 3 h. Ascent & descent: +/- 300 m.*

### Day 6 – Discovering the Peninsula of Portofino

From Portovenere you travel to the famous Portofino Peninsula today. You settle in the beautiful small town of Camogli (or in alternative to Santa Margherita Ligure), where you leave the luggage in your hotel. Then you start the first walk on the Peninsula of Portofino, towards the beautifully located monastery of San Fruttuoso, dating back to the 11th century and set in its own cove and reachable only by boat or on foot. The walk takes through forested areas, along the church of San Rocco and a number of impressive viewpoints. From San Fruttuoso there is the possibility to walk back or take the boat. In the afternoon take your time to explore the colourful streets of beautiful Camogli itself.

**Accommodation: Camogli / Santa Margherita Ligure - Hotel \*\*\***

*Total walking distance: 7,5 km. Approx. walking time: 3,5 h. Ascent & descent: +/- 550 m.*



## Day 7 – From Santa Margherita to Portofino

First you make a short transfer by train to Santa Margherita, where you have a bit of time to walk around this attractive town. Then you walk to Portofino, a resort for the jet set, but also a very attractive and colourful village in its own right. Do visit its castle and lighthouse, a spectacular viewpoint! Energy permitting, you can continue along the trail, with splendid views across the Gulf of Genoa to the Abbey of San Fruttuoso, approaching this 11<sup>th</sup>-century jewel from the other side. You can then choose to return by boat to Santa Margherita, or directly to Camogli.

**Accommodation: Camogli / Santa Margherita Ligure - Hotel \*\*\***

*Total walking time: 6 km. Approx. walking time: 3,5 h. Ascent & descent: +/- 250 m. (+ longer option)*

### Optional Extra Day – Genova

## Day 8 – Departure

End of the tour.



## TOUR DETAILS

### ACCOMMODATION & MEALS

All nights are spent in beautiful, characteristic family-run hotels (generally 3-star). All rooms have en-suite facilities.

All accommodations are on **B&B** basis. No evening meals are included, so you are free to choose from the wide choice of restaurants in the area for your dinner. Your accommodation holder can give you good tips. On some occasions you can also choose to eat at the premises of the hotel.

No picnic lunches are included in the tour price, but these can be prepared for you by the accommodation holders, or materials for picnics can be purchased in the villages where you'll be staying. On some occasions you have the option to have your lunch in a restaurant along the way.

### UPGRADE/CHANGES IN ACCOMODATION:

*It is possible to do this tour staying in more luxurious 4-star hotels. Accommodation in Monterosso – the largest village in the Cinque Terre - is also available, replacing the days in Levanto.*



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## INCLUDED

- 7 nights accommodation – BB
- 3 nights in Hotel\*\*\* in Levanto – BB
- 2 nights in Hotel\*\*\* in Portovenere – BB
- 2 nights in Hotel\*\*\* in Camogli/Santa Margherita Ligure – BB
- Extensive route notes, with description of the route & tourist information
- Maps at 1 : 25.000 scale (or better)
- GPS tracks for each day
- Luggage transfer on day 4
- 24/7 h local assistance

## NOT INCLUDED

- Departure taxes
- Visas & Travel Insurance
- Tourist tax
- Drinks and meals not mentioned in the itinerary
- Optional additional tours or activities
- Tips & Items of personal nature

## LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

**Moderately easy (2-3):** Mostly easy walks, on well-maintained paths, though some include uphill walking, sometimes on paths with rough surfaces. On some days extensions or shortcuts are possible.

**Fitness:** High standard of fitness is not necessary but you should be able to walk for up to 5 hours a day in the hot sun on dusty or stony tracks.

## FOOTPATHS & WAYMARKING

**Footpaths:** Most paths are relatively well maintained, but during the season some paths can get overgrown (*we are in continuous contact with local authorities to keep the paths clean – please help us by providing your feedback on the quality of the paths*).

**Waymarking:** A large part of the route is waymarked (mainly by the parks); elsewhere you need to follow the route descriptions provided together with the maps. With these you will always be able to find your route.

## ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

**Arrival:** The tour starts in LEVANTO. There are frequent trains from all directions.

**Departure:** The tour ends after breakfast on day 8 in Camogli or Santa Margherita Ligure. The return is most easily made by train. Back to Levanto is 30 minutes by train.

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