

ITALIAN RIVIERA



The best places to eat, sleep and play
in the Italian Riviera

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INTRODUCTION



TripAdvisor, the most trusted source for where to eat, sleep and play in thousands of destinations around the world, has collected the best insider tips from its 40 million monthly visitors to produce a unique series of travel guides. In addition to the best hotels, restaurants and attractions for every type of traveler, you'll get great advice about what to pack, how to get around and where to find the best views. Be sure to check out the guides at www.tripadvisor.com.



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PACKING TIPS

1. **"Hiking boots** (or low hiking shoes) are essential if you don't want to have sore feet halfway through" the Cinque Terre Trail.—TripAdvisor Member, Milan, Italy
2. Pack a **bathing suit**. "The water was icy for swimming, but when you get hot enough, it feels good."—TripAdvisor Member, Athens, Ga.
3. **"Dress is casual**. Only for nights out will you find people very dressed up."—TripAdvisor Member, Genoa, Italy
4. "Have add-on clothing of **light layers** that's easy to carry and build on if the weather changes."—TripAdvisor Member, Mooloolaba, Australia

Inside the ITALIAN RIVIERA

Mountains plunge dramatically to the aquamarine sea along the Italian Riviera—aka Liguria—a small, half-moon-shaped coastal region of winding roads, pebbly beaches and picturesque resort towns dappled with medieval and Baroque architecture. This tourist-friendly stretch of northwestern Italy extends west to the French border near Ventimiglia and east to the Gulf of La Spezia. At its heart is the historic port city of Genoa, birthplace of Christopher Columbus.

Arts-minded travelers from Lord Byron and Shelley to Ernest Hemingway have long sought respite on Liguria's shores, and today the region boasts 170 museums and a summer festival season that explodes with music, dance and theater.

Each village delivers distinctive charms, from bustling Rapallo with its harborside castle to friendly palm-dotted Santa Margherita Ligure—both convenient base camps for exploration thanks to the local train, bus and ferry service. Topping most must-do lists is the Cinque Terre ("five lands"), a cluster of tiny villages connected via hiking trails that have earned UNESCO World Heritage status.

Top VIEWS



THE ITALIAN RIVIERA'S BEST VIEWS

"The best Cinque Terre view is from Monterosso to Vernazza. It's all pretty, but seeing Vernazza in the distance from the **Monterosso trail** is spectacular."—TripAdvisor Member, Nashville, Tenn.

Footpath Monterosso-Vernazza

"The views from the **Cinque Terre ferry** were amazing. That is the way to take in the picturesque mountain scenes."—TripAdvisor Member, Tallahassee, Fla.

Consorzio Marittimo Turistico 5 Terre, 018 773 2987

Il Bigo "is a replica of the device that was used many years ago to offload cargo from the ships. It rotates as it goes up, allowing you to see the skyline of Genoa with the port and the towers in the mountains."—TripAdvisor Member, Burlingame, Calif.

Il Bigo, Ponte Spinola, Porto Vecchio, Genoa

Where to PLAY

TOP 10 Attractions

1. Parco Nazionale Cinque Terre
2. Castello d'Albertis, Corso Dogali 18
3. Pista Ciclabile Area 24, San Remo
4. Cattedrale di San Lorenzo Campanile, Via Reggio Tommaso 17, Piazza San Lorenzo, Genoa, 010 265 786
5. La Citta dei Bambini, Magazzini del Cotone, Genoa, 010 234 5635
6. Palazzo Imperiale, Secondo Piano Nobile, Genoa
7. Caves of Toirano, Albenga
8. Ferrovia Genova-Casella Railroad, Piazza Manin, 800 08 53 11
9. Trail 2, Cinque Terre National Park, Riomaggiore
10. Gallery of the White Palace (Galleria di Palazzo Bianco), Via Garibaldi 11, Genoa, 010 557 2193



FAMILIES

"A good choice, especially with children, is the town of **Levanto**. It's a five-minute train ride from the Cinque Terre. The town has many family friendly restaurants." The long, sandy beach is "the best in the area. It has some nice large piazzas where the children can play with the local kids."—TripAdvisor Member, San Clemente, Calif.

Levanto

The **Genoa Aquarium** "is reputed to be the best aquarium in the world, and it was amazing! There were sharks, dolphins and the strangest, funniest looking thing I have ever seen. It was huge and looked like an alien who'd taken some kind of mind-altering drug."—TripAdvisor Member, Stourbridge, U.K.

Genoa Aquarium, Area Porto Antico, Ponte Spinola, Genoa, 010 23 451

"**Rent a motorboat** at the harbor in Vernazza. We cruised on our own up and down the coast past all five Cinque Terre villages. My 15- and 17-year-old daughters enjoyed piloting the boat."—TripAdvisor Member, Athens, Ga.

Motorboat Rentals, Vernazza Harbor, Vernazza

"...a world apart"



ROMANCE

"Go to the district of **Nervi** and stroll on the romantic passeggiata along the Mediterranean, do a little shopping and find a nice cafe."—TripAdvisor Member, New York, N.Y.

Nervi, Genoa

An easy walk for lovers, "**Via dell'Amore** between Manarola and Riomaggiore is wide, paved and overlooking the sea." Take a stroll along the path at sunset—"it will be very romantic, indeed!"—TripAdvisor Member, Milan, Italy

Via dell'Amore, Between Manarola and Riomaggiore, Cinque Terre

"I fell in love with the **Centro Storico** of Genoa. It's wonderful—a world apart. Narrow streets, typical artisan shops and boutiques. A truly magical atmosphere."—TripAdvisor Member, Italian Riviera

Centro Storico, Genoa

Where to PLAY



BUDGET



Try before you buy at **Cantina du Sciacchetta**. "We tried everything: wines, pestos, olive oils. The list was endless. We bought picnic supplies and went back each evening to hang out. Old-fashioned service and fun. What an experience!!"—TripAdvisor Member, Sparta, N.J.

Cantina du Sciacchetta, Via Roma 7, Monterosso al Mare, 018 781 7828

"Don't forget to visit the bay of **San Fruttuoso**, with its old **Abbey** overlooking the beach. If you like hiking, you can walk from Portofino to San Fruttuoso (one and a half hour walk), have lunch there and come back by boat."—TripAdvisor Member, Italian Riviera

Abbazia di San Fruttuoso, Camogli, 018 577 2703

"The **Cattedrale di San Lorenzo** was founded in the early twelfth century and has become the region's most celebrated religious site. An architectural wonder, check the Gothic exterior and then the frescoes covering the inside."—TripAdvisor Member, Chicago, Ill.

Cattedrale di San Lorenzo Campanile, Via Reggio Tommaso 17, Piazza San Lorenzo, Genoa, 010 265 786

"Not for the faint-hearted"

ADVENTURE



The **Cinque Terre bike paths** are "higher up in the hills than the hiking paths. But there are some great trails with spectacular views. There is also something special about being high up on the hills and looking at the sea, but not being able to hear the shore."—TripAdvisor Member, Connecticut

Bike Trails, Cinque Terre National Park, 018 776 031

(Bikes can be hired at Park information offices.)

"We took the train to Riomaggiore and hiked back the length of **Trail 2**. Each segment of the trail gets progressively more difficult, but the setting is breathtakingly beautiful. The sea, the sun, the vineyards—the experience is worth all the effort. Not for the faint-hearted, but not to be missed by able-bodied adventure-lovers."—TripAdvisor Member, Kissimmee, Fla.

Trail 2, Cinque Terre National Park, Riomaggiore

"In Riomaggiore we rented **sea kayaks and snorkel gear**. There's a rocky beach just south of the town that's good for swimming, snorkeling, etc."—TripAdvisor Member, Salt Lake City, Utah

Cooperative Sub 5 Terre, Via San Giacomo, Riomaggiore, 018 792 0596, 018 792 0011

TripAdvisor members have posted more than 6,000,000 photos on the site. The good, the bad and the very candid. It's almost like being there!

EDUCATIONAL/HISTORICAL



"Unfortunately, **Galata Museo del Mare** is neglected by tourists that only go to the aquarium. If you want to understand the history of Genoa, however, take the trouble to visit. It's spectacular, with a reconstruction of a galleon in original dimension."—TripAdvisor Member, Milan, Italy

Galata Museo del Mare, Calata De Mari I, Genoa, 010 234 5655

"I'm not speaking because I'm a Ventimiglia native; I'm speaking because I love beautiful things. And these really are! **Balzi Rossi** are rock caves where Homo Cro-Magnon (a cousin of Neanderthal Man) lived. This is a true piece of the history of humanity!"—TripAdvisor Member, Ventimiglia

Red Rocks Museum (Museo dei Balzi Rossi), Via Balzi Rosso 9, Ventimiglia, 018 438 113

"Find a beautiful, surprising piece of Japan, a wondrous pearl set into a green, romantic Mediterranean hillock. This is the **Chiossone Museum**! The Japanese art kept and exhibited in the museum really deserves a thorough visit."—TripAdvisor Member, Italy

Museo d'Arte Orientale Edoardo Chiossone, Piazzale Mazzini I, Genoa, 010 542 285

RELAXATION



"The **Staglieno Cemetery** is considered an open air museum in view of the number and the artistic quality of the monuments. Among the celebrities buried here are: the Italian 19-th century patriot and politician Giuseppe Mazzini, the pop singer and author Fabrizio de Andre' and Oscar Wilde's spouse."—TripAdvisor Member, Milan, Italy

Staglieno Cemetery (Cimitero di Staglieno), Piazzale Resasco, Genoa, 010 870 184

Santuario di Montalegre "is perched on top of the hills behind Rapallo. It is an impressive building. In addition, there's an excellent view across Rapallo and as far as Portofino. There are several walks and picnic areas marked out around the church."—TripAdvisor Member, Scunthorpe, U.K.

Santuario di Montalegre, Via al Santuario 24, Rapallo, 018 523 9000

"There is no doubt that, with its extremely varied surroundings, the undisputed sovereign of **Dolceacqua** is nature, which visitors can experience by taking a walk into the vines and olive groves. Pure nature, with fresh air and clear water surrounded by silence—this, for me, is Dolceacqua."—TripAdvisor Member, Dolceacqua

Dolceacqua, Genoa

What's the **TOUR**

How to Get Around



"Traversing the Italian Riviera may be best done **by car**; all the country's cities and coasts are extremely accessible. Have some form of money, just in case you end up on a toll road and are required to pay a travel fee." —TripAdvisor Member, Chicago, Ill.

"From Rapallo, there are small **ferries** that go to Santa Margherita Ligure, Portofino and the wonderful San Fruttuoso Abbey. It's an easy train ride from Rapallo to Cinque Terre, too, and there are beautiful ferry rides between the towns." —TripAdvisor Member, Princeton, N.J.

Walk the Cinque Terre trail. "Many hikers prefer to begin in Monterosso because the stretch from Monterosso to Vernazza is the most difficult and it's good to hike this section when you're not tired! Walking in one direction and taking the boat back is an excellent idea." —TripAdvisor Member

Cinque Terre National Park, 018 776 031

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WHERE to eat

FAMILIES

"One of our best meals and certainly our most enjoyable experience was visiting **Gambero Rosso** in Vernazza. The restaurant owner treated us like family and was most attentive to our wishes." —TripAdvisor Member, Juneau, Alaska

Gambero Rosso, Piazza Marconi 7, Vernazza, 018 781 2265

"For pastries, definitely check out **Il Pirata delle Cinque Terre**. It's run by two brothers (nicknamed the Cannoli Brothers) from Sicily. One of the brothers insisted that we must try their cannoli, that it would be the best we've ever tried—it was amazing!" —TripAdvisor Member, Madison, Wis.

Il Pirata delle Cinque Terre, Via Gavino 36, Vernazza, 018 781 2047

"For quick and delicious pizza that is served by the slice or made to order, try **Pizzeria Ercole**. This is as close to fast food as you'll get in Vernazza, and it's fabulous!" —TripAdvisor Member, California

Pizzeria Lercari Ercole, Via E. Q. Visconti 34, Vernazza, 018 781 2545

ROMANCE

"A wonderful place to eat that is just a little bit off the beaten track is **Via Venti**. Check it out: small, quiet, with exquisite food. Quite special." —TripAdvisor Member, New York, N.Y.

Ristorante Via Venti, Via XX Settembre 32, Monterosso al Mare, 018 781 8347

"You feel you are in a romantic Italian movie!"

"Enchanting, romantic, overwhelming views, the **Locanda della Marchesa** has magnificent food, outstanding service and an unforgettable charm that made our dining experience one to remember. You feel you are in a romantic Italian movie!" —TripAdvisor Member, New York City, N.Y.

Locanda della Marchesa, Piazza della Chiesa 19, La Spezia, 018 766 0491

"I love having one night up at the castle at **Ristorante Belforte**. Make sure you reserve ahead and ask for a table on the edge with sea view. Romantic!" —TripAdvisor Member, Los Altos, Calif.

Ristorante Belforte, Via Guidoni 42, Vernazza, 018 781 2222

BUDGET

Gran Ristoro has "an astonishing choice of sandwiches. Very good quality, very good price. A must, if you don't mind waiting in line." —TripAdvisor Member, Trieste, Italy.

Gran Ristoro, Via Sottoripa 27, Genoa, 010 247 3127

There's a "great cafe/bar called **Sabot** on the Santa Margherita Ligure waterfront. It has the best tapas—free while you drink and people/scooter watch." —TripAdvisor Member, Adelaide, Australia

Sabot, Piazza Martiri della Libertà 32, Santa Margherita Ligure, 018 528 0747


"Portofino is very expensive for food and drink; however **Pizzeria El Portico** is a good value. Excellent pizzas for two and a bottle/carafe of house wine for under 30 euros." —TripAdvisor Member, La Spezia

Pizzeria El Portico, Via Roma 21, Portofino, 018 526 9239

WHERE to eat



HEALTH-CONSCIOUS

 “**Il Faro** is small and family-run. The owner usually starts you off with a small antipasto that he makes differently every day. We split a Caprese salad, each had a pasta dish, bread and a liter of Barbera house red.”—TripAdvisor Member, St. Marys, Ohio

Ristorante il Faro, Via Maragliano 24A, Santa Margherita Ligure, 018 528 6867

“**La Lanterna** in Riomaggiore is known to have the best food and freshest fish in the Cinque Terre. Best to choose dishes from the chalkboard; these are the daily specials and fresh fish dishes.”—TripAdvisor Member, Italy


Trattoria La Lanterna, Via S. Giacomo 46, Riomaggiore, 018 792 0589

“Monterosso has **Miky's** serving fresh fish dishes, with a two-fork Michelin rating. This is a really good place, frequented by locals. Good value dining and a nice wine list.”—TripAdvisor Member, Italy

Ristorante Miky, Via Fegina 104, Monterosso al Mare, 018 781 7608

“You won't be sorry!”

HIDDEN GEMS

 “I liked dinner at **Ristorante Il Ciliegio**. It is way above town but has a shuttle van. Get the pansotti with nut sauce as your primi—you won't be sorry!”—TripAdvisor Member

Ristorante Il Ciliegio, Localita' beo 2, Monterosso al Mare, 018 781 7829

“Don't eat at the restaurants along the waterfront—too expensive. Go into the side alleys for many nice restaurants with fresh seafood and other local cuisine. There's a cheap and cheerful restaurant called **Da Maria**, very popular at lunch, in a little alley just off Via XXV Aprile. It's a neat experience.”—TripAdvisor Member, Asti, Italy

Da Maria, Vico Testadoro 14R, Genoa, 010 581 080

“Located at the top of the town, **Billy's Restaurant** is not on a normally traveled pathway, but well worth the view and food. We ate there several times and pretty well went through his menu.”—TripAdvisor Member, Tulsa, Okla.

Trattoria Da Billy, Via Rolandi 122, Manarola, 018 762 0628

SPECIAL EVENTS



On the **Feast Day of St. John**, what are said to be the ashes of St. John the Baptist are paraded from Genoa's Cathedral of San Lorenzo to the historic port and back in a festive procession. (June 24)

Feast Day of St. John, Genoa

Enjoy family-friendly storytelling, feasts, music and dancing at the two-day **Druwid Fest** in the medieval hilltop town of Bajardo. (July)

Druwid Fest, Bajardo, 018 467 3054

Bask in summer sea air infused with classical music at the **Festival Internazionale di Musica da Camera**, set in the square of Cervo's baroque Corallini Church. (July)

International Chamber Music Festival (Festival Internazionale di Musica da Camera), Piazza dei Corallini, Cervo, 018 340 9018, <http://www.cervo.com/festival.php>

Experience art, music, drama and dance in one scenic setting when the **Villa Faraldi Festival** unfolds for an international audience in this tiny town. (July 10 - August 17)

Villa Faraldi Festival, Various venues, 018 341 025, <http://www.villafaraldifestival.com>

Honor Rapallo's patron saint at the **Festa patronale per Nostra Signora di Montallegro**, a three-day religious celebration punctuated with massive fireworks displays. (July 1 - 3)

Festa patronale per Nostra Signora di Montallegro (Fireworks at Rapallo), Via al Santuario 24, Rapallo, 018 523 9000, <http://www.santuariomontallegro.com>

Take in eight stage productions beneath the Mediterranean sky during the **Theatrical Festival of Borgio Verezzi**, held in the historic Ligurian town of the same name. (July 8 - August 10)

Theatrical Festival of Borgio Verezzi, Piazza St. Augustine, Borgio Verezzi, 019 610 167, <http://www.festivalverezzi.it>

Where to STAY



FAMILIES

"The warm welcome we received at **Diana Grand** felt like coming to stay with friends. Our children enjoyed the inside pool and private sandy beach; mommy and daddy loved breakfast on the terrace and wine on the balcony in the evening."—TripAdvisor Member, Nyon, Switzerland

Diana Grand Hotel, Via Garibaldi 110, Allassio, 018 264 2701

"Having a small child of 2 years and I of only a month, the **Hotel Gabriella** was perfect. The staff is extremely friendly, it has a great swimming pool and is right on the beach."—TripAdvisor Member, Turin, Italy

Hotel Gabriella, Via dei Gerani 9, Diano Marina, 018 340 3131

Hotel Florida is "truly a very special place for a family. Our room had a beautiful sea view, and with the balcony door open at night, we were able to sleep to the lull of the waves not 100 feet from us."—TripAdvisor Member, Paris, France

Hotel Florida, Lungomare Biaggini 35, Lerici, 018 796 7332

Have questions about the Italian Riviera? Get insider advice from local experts in our forums. The majority of questions are answered within 24 hours.



ROMANCE

Hotel Pasquale "is a real gem of a hotel, built against a small cliff so that all its rooms face the front, with a panoramic view of the Mediterranean, the beautiful Cinque Terre coastline and the quaint little town of Monterosso. The view itself is worth the trip."—TripAdvisor Member, Carlsbad, Czech Republic

Hotel Pasquale, Via Fegina 4, Monterosso, 018 781 7550

"Wow! What a hotel!" **Grand Hotel Bristol** boasts "fantastic views, polite staff, top quality food and furnishing like a princess's palace. They even have traffic lights on the room doors to let staff know when they can disturb."—TripAdvisor Member, Prangins, Switzerland

Grand Hotel Bristol, Via Aurelia Orientale 369, Rapallo, 018 527 3313

"The view itself is worth the trip."

"**Hotel Margherita** offers all you need to enjoy a full stay in this corner of paradise: a sober and elegant environment, well treated in the recent renovation. All of the staff operate with professionalism and skill, demonstrating the enthusiasm that characterizes their commitment."—TripAdvisor Member, Pistoia, Italy

Hotel Margherita, Via Roma 72, Monterosso, 018 780 8002

BUDGET

"I spent a beautiful week at the **Hotel Corallo**. The rooms are all renovated and have balconies with a garden view. The personnel are kind and very friendly. It's only 100 meters from the sea."—TripAdvisor Member, Milan, Italy

Hotel Corallo, Via Dei Gigli 5, Diano Marina, 018 340 2607

"Our room at **Ca'Ligure** had a wonderful big balcony from which we could see the sea. The hosts and their staff do really make you feel at home. Not to forget their friendly German shepherd, Biltz, who takes care of the owners and their guests."—TripAdvisor Aalen, Germany

Ca'Ligure, Via Concezione 10, Pietra Ligure, 019 625 181

Hotel Garden is "a charming hotel! We had a wonderful room with a balcony overlooking the street. The room and bathroom were surprisingly spacious and the bath towels were linen! Very friendly and helpful staff. No negatives at all!"—TripAdvisor Member, Carlsbad, Calif.

Hotel Garden, Corso Italia 6, Levanto, 018 780 8173

"A charming hotel!"

LUXURY

"I strongly advise choosing a room at **Excelsior Palace** with a sea view and balcony, so you can fully enjoy the fantastic dawns and sunsets that Liguria offers. The beauty of Italy never exhausts itself—fortunately!"—TripAdvisor Member, Como, Italy

Excelsior Palace Hotel, Via San Michele di Pagana 8, Rapallo, 018 523 0666

Royal Hotel is "located up on a hill so the views from the balcony were beautiful. From our room we had the most magnificent view of the ocean. Most nights before dinner we'd sit outside on our balcony and have a glass of wine, watching the waves crash in."—TripAdvisor Member, Toronto, Ontario

Royal Hotel San Remo, Corso Imperatrice 80, San Remo, 018 453 91

"If I were a billionaire, I would book a suite from the first day of opening season in March throughout the very last day in November, move my summer wardrobe to **Hotel Splendido** and just try to spend as many days as possible in this peaceful retreat."—TripAdvisor Member, Milan, Italy

Hotel Splendido, 16 Viale Baratta, Portofino, 018 526 7801

Where to **STAY**



HIDDEN GEMS

Hotel Villa Steno "is quietly secluded up on a hill and yet in the middle of a wide assortment of restaurants, shops, etc. At night, the smells from the garden, the incredible amount of stars and the illuminated tower of Monterosso make the place seem like true magic."—TripAdvisor Member

Hotel Villa Steno, Via Roma 109, Monterosso, 018 781 7028

"Our stay in at **Il Salotto di Lucilla** will always have special memories. Our room was spacious, beautifully appointed and spotlessly clean. The area is quiet, and the owner suggested fabulous local eateries. It's in an ideal location for anyone planning to go to Cinque Terre. There are so many more things we could add, but you need to experience it yourself."—TripAdvisor Member, Melbourne, Australia

Il Salotto di Lucilla, Passo Palestro 3/5, Genoa, 010 882 391

"When you are done with Cinque Terre at night, it is such a good feeling to come back to **Hotel Villa Edera**, just relaxing in quiet with a lovely view to the Ligurian hills and Moneglia."—TripAdvisor Member, Denmark

Hotel Villa Edera, Via Venino 12, Moneglia, 018 549 291

"You need to experience it yourself!"

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