



Cinque Terre

(Short Break)

The best walks between coloured villages and terraced vineyards



TRIP NOTES 2021

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INTRODUCTION

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 – today used as footpaths – takes you through an extraordinary landscape of terraces, built by hand with stones and earth.

During this short break you'll do some of the best walks: from Levanto you walk along the coast to the headland of Punta Mesco, the most notable promontory in the region, with beautiful views over the sea. It will also give you the first glance of the Cinque Terre, with the option to walk down to the first village, Monterosso al Mare. Of course you do the most 'classic' of all walks in the Cinque Terre: the walk along the coast touching all five villages: Riomaggiore, Manarola, an attractive little village with steep multicoloured houses overlooking a rocky port, Corniglia, perched on a ridge overlooking the sea, and Vernazza, arguably the prettiest of all the villages. From there can you continue through terraced vineyards and nice woodlands to Monterosso al Mare again, approaching it from the other side.

But the area has more to offer: the small towns of Portovenere, with a wonderful island just in front of it at the entrance to the 'Gulf of Poets', and the lively Levanto, a charming medieval town with a broad beach, both nearby.

During the first days you'll stay in Levanto, a lively little town with a good beach and a charming medieval centre. As the town doesn't live from tourism only, also out of season there is still some 'local life', with bars and restaurants open. Upon request you can then either move to one of the villages on the Cinque Terre coast (we recommend Riomaggiore) or travel by train to the start of the walks.

You walk through the extensive footpath network of the area from village to village, between forest and vineyards, through a spectacular terraced landscape overlooking the sea. You also have the time to visit the historic towns of Levanto, Portovenere 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 which is suitable for those who have some experience of walking and a good general physical condition. Most of the walks are on good paths, parts of them waymarked. Average walking times: from approx 4 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. In case you arrive early you can already make the short walk 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. Just short of the headland you can make a small detour to the ruins of an old 11th-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 time to explore the town before taking the local train back to Levanto.

Accommodation: Levanto - Hotel ***

Total (optional) walking time: around 3,5 hours + sightseeing time (4-5 hours with extra option).

Day 2 – To the Coast West of Levanto

Today you walk in a western direction from Levanto. 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. It then goes through the seaside hills towards the small 'village' of Framura, an aggregation of scattered hamlets on the hillside. 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 or just relax. You'll get the chance to have lunch there as well. You can take the train back to Levanto from any of the villages on the way, in case you want to shorten the walk.

Accommodation: Levanto - Hotel ***

Total walking distance: 16 km. Approx. walking time: 6 hours.

Day 3 – The "Walk of Love"

You first take the train to Riomaggiore, the southernmost of the five villages, where you can drop your luggage off at the hotel already. Then you start the most 'classic' of all walks in the Cinque Terre: the walk along the famous 'Sentiero dell'Amore' ('Lover's Walk') to Manarola, an attractive little village with steep multicoloured houses overlooking a rocky port. Then head up the 365 steps to Corniglia, perched on a ridge overlooking the sea. From there you 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. You contour around the hillsides following a narrow track that leads you up and down, before a fairly steep descent brings you into the village itself. In Vernazza, arguably the prettiest of all the villages, there is time to climb the castle tower for a stunning view of the port with its brightly painted boats. There are numerous cafés and bars where you can enjoy refreshments before taking the train back to your hotel. As an extra option you can also continue your walk along the coast to Monterosso, approaching this beautiful little town from the other side.

Accommodation: Riomaggiore - Hotel ***

Total walking distance: 15 km. Approx. walking time: 3,5 hours + sightseeing time (5,5 hours with extra option).

Day 4 – From Riomaggiore to Portovenere

Today you walk in an eastern direction. From Riomaggiore you begin your walk to Campiglia and Portovenere. You hike up a long flight of steps to the Santuario della Madonna di Montenero. Continuing uphill you begin walking along the coastal cliffs, through terraced vineyards, enjoying wonderful views of the coastline framed by clear blue waters. You are now on the 'Sentiero Rosso', the ridge-top traverse that goes from one end of the Cinque Terre to the other. You pass through the little hamlet of Campiglia where you can stop for some refreshments. The track narrows as you continue walking down into the pine forest towards Portovenere with further spectacular views.



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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 flight of steps takes you into the heart of the village. There is time to visit the charming village and Punta San Pietro, before returning to Riomaggiore by boat.

Hotel *** - Riomaggiore

Total walking distance: 13 km. Approx. walking time: 5,5 hours + sightseeing time.

Day 5 – Departure

End of the tour.

TOUR DETAILS

ACCOMMODATION & MEALS

All nights are spent in beautiful, characteristic family-run hotels (generally 3/4-star; 5-star on request). 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.

Nights 1 & 2: These nights are spent at Levanto, a nice old medieval town. You'll stay in a welcoming and comfortable 3-star hotel, centrally located at walking distance from all the main monuments of the medieval town centre.

Nights 3 & 4: These two nights are spent in the lively little village of Riomaggiore, the easternmost of the five villages, with colourful houses and a charming little harbour.

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 either the days in Levanto, or those in Riomaggiore.

INCLUDED

- 2 nights in Levanto*** - BB
- 2 nights in Riomaggiore*** - BB
- Extensive route notes, with description of the route & tourist information
- Maps at 1 : 25.000 scale
- 24/7 assistance



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NOT INCLUDED

- Departure & city taxes
- Visas
- Travel Insurance
- Luggage transfer
- 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

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. You are allowed to park a car here (about € 12,00 /day).

Departure: The tour ends after breakfast in RIOMAGGIORE on day 5. The return to Levanto is most easily made by train, which takes about 30 minutes.

N.B. Please note that there is no (cheap) parking space anywhere on the Cinque Terre except for Levanto!



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TOUR VARIATIONS

The very frequent trains, which connect all the villages, make it easy to modify the programme. It gives you all the freedom to do the walks at your own pace, or alternatively, do some sightseeing.

Therefore you can also opt for **just one accommodation** on the Cinque Terre, instead of two (Levanto & Riomaggiore). This accommodation can either be at Levanto, Monterosso or Riomaggiore.

**It is possible to include some extra nights in your tour, in any of the accommodations 'en route'.
*Extra walking or sightseeing options will be provided !!!***

At the beginning or the end of the tour there is also an opportunity to visit Genoa and/or Pisa / Florence, or spend some time on the beach, somewhere in Liguria. The tour can easily be extended with a few days in Pisa or Florence. Several good accommodations are available. Details & prices on request.

EXTRA NIGHTS

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SHORTER & LONGER VERSIONS

A longer, 7-day version of this tour is also available: [The Best of the Cinque Terre](#) – a tour on which you literally do all walks of the Cinque Terre.

In case you want to stay some nights in beautiful [Portovenere](#), overlooking the 'Gulf of Poets': this tour can easily be extended with a few nights there.

There are several tours which include two days on the [Portofino Peninsula](#), an area where one can make some stunning walks, with less crowds along the trails than in the Cinque Terre.

Longer 6-, 8-, 10-, 11- and 12-day versions are also available. Prices on request.

Have a look at our other Cinque Terre tours as well!

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