



*Independent walking tour (CIN7)*

# Cinque Terre

## The best Walks from Levanto

*Walking between coloured fishing villages and terraced vineyards*



## TRIP NOTES 2024

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\*\*\*GENIUS LOCI TRAVEL - The Real Spirit of Italy\*\*\*



## INTRODUCTION

*On this short walking tour you will see some of the best walks. The famous ones, but also some of the less crowded trails. 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.*

*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 tour you'll do all 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: one day you'll walk to the small town of Portovenere, with a wonderful island just in front of it at the entrance to the 'Gulf of Poets', and one daywalk brings you along the several sanctuaries higher up in the mountains, with great views on the villages down at the seaside.*

*Of course you'll have the time to explore lively Levanto, a charming medieval town with a broad beach, where you'll stay during the first days of your tour. Levanto is 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.*



*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 are waymarked. Average walking times: from approx 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.

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

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

### Day 2 – From Levanto along the Coast 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.

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

*Total walking distance: 9,5 km. Approx. walking time: 3,5 h. + sightseeing time (4-5 h. with extra option).*

### Day 3 – 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.

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

*Total walking distance: 16 km. Approx. walking time: 6 h.*



## Day 4 – 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.

### Hotel \*\*\*/\*\*\*\* - Levanto

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

### Optional extra day – The Sanctuaries of Madonna di Reggio and Saviore

*Today’s walk takes you into the inland of the Cinque Terre, to the churches of Madonna di Reggio and Madonna di Saviore. You first take the train to Vernazza and then walk along the coast to Monterosso, approaching this beautiful little town from the other side. After a coffee break you start climbing up to the sanctuary of Saviore. Here you can have something to eat or relax for a while, before walking on to the next sanctuary, that of Madonna di Reggio. Then the walk continues more or less along the contour lines; you walk through the hills to the little church of San Bernardo, with beautiful views over the coast, and from there you descend down to the coast at Vernazza again. A shorter option takes you directly from Madonna di Reggio, past a number of little chapels, back down to Vernazza.*

### Hotel \*\*\*/\*\*\*\* - Levanto

*Total walking distance: 9 km. Approx. walking time: 4,5 h. + sightseeing time.*

## Day 5 – From Riomaggiore to Portovenere

Today you walk to the eastern tip of the peninsula. By train or boat you travel to Riomaggiore. Here starts your walk to Campiglia and Portovenere. You first hike up a long flight of steps to the Santuario della Madonna di Montenero (optional bus). 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. Arriving at the 16<sup>th</sup>-century castle above the village, you may be able to see the distant peaks of the Alpi Apuane before a long flight of stepstake you into the heart of the village. There is time to visit the charming village and Punta San Pietro, before returning to Levanto by boat.

### Hotel \*\*\*/\*\*\*\* - Levanto

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

## Day 6 – Departure

End of the tour.





## TOUR DETAILS

### ACCOMMODATION & MEALS

This tour is a so-called 'centre-based' tour, which means you will be staying at only one hotel for the duration of the whole tour. On the Cinque Terre, thanks to the efficient railway network, it is still feasible to do all the best walks, without the hassle of having to change hotel.

For this tour we can offer you a large selection of 'Premiere Inns', very good hotels, of which several among the world's best hotels, as acclaimed from Condé Nast Traveler, Travel+Leisure and many others.

Genius Loci Travel, as one of the leading adventure travel companies in Italy, can book your room in any hotel you could dream of! All rooms have en-suite facilities (of course!).

Accommodation is on **B&B** basis – with all breakfasts included.

No evening meals are included, so you are free to choose from the wide choice of restaurants in the area for your dinner in the evening. Your accommodation holder can give you good tips. On some occasions you can also choose to eat at the premises of the hotel. Also can we make dinner reservations for you, to ensure you the special place at the special restaurant of your choice (on request).

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.

### *Suggested Accommodation*

*The choice of a hotel is something personal. We at Genius Loci Travel are proud of our selection of accommodations. As stated by some of our clients: one of our strengths lies in the careful selection of the right accommodation for the type of tour, the type of clients and the type of area. Not the obvious places, but small, well-situated, often family-run places, with a personal welcome. Our accommodations are often small boutique hotels, but can be wonderful Bed & Breakfasts (yes, this is the Italian word!), as well as agriturismo's, rural accommodations, which are often real countryside Relais. All are chosen for their accessibility to the trail and for the warmth of their welcome. Many are located in historical buildings or placed in exceptional spots. All give you the feeling of being truly in Italy, and not in just another hotel anywhere in the world. All represent the best price/quality ratio the area offers and they all employ local people.*

*On the whole and for these reasons we try to avoid chain and big name hotels. Many of our hoteliers are walkers themselves and take an active interest in our clients' progress. Most of the places we have been using for many years and therefore a good working relationship.*

*For this 'Best of Cinque Terre Walking Tour' we will make suggestions for an unforgettable stay. But of course you can also let us know your preference – and we'll be able to book it for you.*

### **UPGRADE/CHANGES IN ACCOMODATION:**

*It is also possible to do this tour staying in Monterosso – the largest village in the Cinque Terre.*



## INCLUDED

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

## NOT INCLUDED

- Visas & Departure & city taxes
- Travel Insurance
- Drinks and meals not mentioned in the itinerary
- 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

**Paths:** 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 and ends in LEVANTO. There are frequent trains from all directions. You are allowed to park a car here (about € 12/day).





## 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 several places to stay instead of ***just one accommodation*** on the Cinque Terre. This accommodation can either be at Levanto or Monterosso.

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.

## 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 and shorter versions of this tour are also available. Prices on request. And check out our other Cinque Terre tours as well!

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