



EUROVILLAS & TOURS
The Italian Riviera

Portofino to Portovenere & the Cinque Terre
Self-guided Walking tour - 10 days/9 nights

Portofino is the star turn of the Italian Riviera, a beautifully preserved fishing village tucked into a perfect bay, but it is only one of the highlights of this fascinating stretch of coastline, and in this tour we combine our personal highlights of the coast line and some of the lesser known but arguably, most outstanding.

Day 1 - Arrive in Camogli on the main La Spezia/Genoa railway line, where you'll spend your first night in a lovely four star hotel set in a restored noble residence in the centre of the town.

Day 2 - The first walk leaves Camogli and takes you along the spectacular coastline on the western edge of the Portofino National Park with vast views across the Gulf of Genoa (from here there is an extension to the tip of the point and back, 5 kms, 1.5 hrs) before climbing up into forest and then descending to Portofino. Your accommodation is in a small family run hotel in the heart of this celebrated village, a short walk from the port. (8 kms, 3 hrs)



Day 3 - Your walk starts with a short ferry ride around the promontory to a beautifully restored 1000 year old abbey tucked in a tiny bay that is only accessible by water or on foot. Medieval stone stairs (used by the monks since the Middle Ages) take up through forest to the top of the national park then down through olive groves into the busy port of Santa Margherita. From where you can get a bus, ferry or walk back to Portofino (1 hr). (6 kms, 3 hrs)

Day 4 - Today you leave Portofino and take a lovely path that winds above the coast passing through olive groves with views over bays and hidden villas to Santa Margherita Ligure and then on to a neighbouring busy port, picking up the pilgrim trail and entering the town over a Roman bridge that Hannibal and his elephants reputedly crossed. .. your accommodation is an excellent 4-star hotel on the waterfront. (11 kms, 3.5 hrs).

Day 5 - This extraordinary walk takes you around the waterfront before climbing a paved trail to a small church high above the coast. From here you continue along this ancient trail, disappearing into a beautiful forest of pine, oak and centuries old chestnut trees, touching a village and then continuing on a paved trail through olive groves with expansive views.

This pilgrim trail takes you past several other sanctuaries before descending down to the port of Chiavari, where you stay in a 4-star hotel near the town's arcaded centre. (17 kms, 5 hrs).

It is possible to break the walk half way taking the train for the rest of the walk - 9 kms, 3 hrs.

Day 6 - The last walk takes you along the sea front to the neighbouring town before picking up the pilgrim trail again, climbing up into the hills and following the old paved trail until you come to a ruined church with breath-taking views down over Sestri Levante and the Bay of Silences, your last destination.

Your accommodation is lovely overlooking the bay a fitting finale to your walk. (15 kms, 4.5 hrs).

It is possible to break the walk half way taking the train for the rest of the walk - 11 kms, 3.5 hrs.

Day 7 - With today's walk you start on the Sentiero Azzuro, the celebrated path that links the five villages of the Cinque Terre. The walk weaves along cliffs and through terraces, offering spectacular views over the bays and the villages, You will pass through the five Cinque Terre villages (where you can stop for lunch) before following the Via del Amore into the last of the five villages, where you'll stay the night. (13 kms, 5.5 hrs)

Day 8 - Today you walk above the eastern part of the gulf to Portovenere. Initially, this quiet route takes you away from the coast, up to a religious sanctuary, where you can rest and enjoy the views, before continuing up through forest to a small village, where you can have lunch. From here you descend through more forest with breathtaking views over the sea into stunning Portovenere. (14 kms, 5 hrs)

Day 9 - The walk today starts with a short boat ride across the narrow waterway that separates Portovenere from the small island opposite. You then follow a circular route that takes you through a small fishing village, past beaches and the remains of a monastery from the 11th century, with wonderful views over the Gulf of La Spezia along the way. You return to Portovenere with the small boat. (12 kms, 3 hrs)

Day 10 - Morning in Portovenere and then transfer thirty minutes drive away to La Spezia, a busy and colourful port, with a number of excellent museums, a picturesque harbour and colourful daily markets and regular rail connections to Rome, Florence and Milan.

Inclusions:

É9 nights accommodation in a combination of very good centrally located three & four star, & family-run hotels. All rooms have en suite bathrooms and air-conditioning.

ÉDaily breakfast, and 7 dinners

ÉLunch recommendations

ÉReading lists and historical and cultural notes

ÉMaps and detailed walking instructions

ÉDaily transfers of baggage between hotels

ÉDrop-off at the end of the tour from Portovenere to La Spezia station (on the Rome/Genoa line)

É24 hour back-up from local operations manager

The Walks: A combination of Grade 1 and Grade 3 walks.

Starting with a walk through the Portofino National Park (Grade 3 - *orientation requires previous experience and there are some long, steep climbs*), this walk picks up the pilgrim trails that ran above the Liguria coast, climbing up into the forested hills each before dipping down to the bustling coastal towns in the evening. The trails follow a combination of ancient paved paths and well-marked walking trails. There are some steep climbs and both days 5 & 6 walks, are over 15 kms, however, in both cases it is possible to break the walks half way along the route and take a local train to the end of the walk. Through the Cinque Terre (Grade 1 - *orientation is straight forward and there are no long, steep climbs*), the walk follows good paths which are straight forward to follow and there are some steep climbs up from the villages up to the trail.

The food: Ligurians like to use their own trusted products which come from the 350 kilometres of coastline with its rough, mountainous hinterland or which is fished out of their own waters. It is an austere but delicious style of cooking that has produced such specialities as pesto sauce and foccaccia. Even the wines grown with great effort on the steep, rocky terraces seems to have been invented in Liguria, and suit the local food perfectly. Your pre-booked dinners will include 3 course -alla carte meals in some of the coast's finest restaurants.

