

The Cinque Terre are one of the most uncontaminated areas in the Mediterranean Sea. Five miles of rocky coast among two promontories, with five small towns castled up on stone spurs in minuscule creeks. **Monterosso, Vernazza, Corniglia, Manarola, Riomaggiore** form the Cinque Terre (Five Lands). For their history and their position, the Cinque Terre have not suffered a massive expansion. Le Cinque Terre is National Protect Park and a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The unique heritage of food and culture

These villages born in the early 11th-century as fortresses. Between each village, there had been no road and the people had used ships for 1000 years. Cliffs of the intricate cove were favorable for natural fortress and this area had become isolated and grown up a unique culture and art. The food culture is distinctive. The rock land had hardly grown crops, and only successful cultivation was grapes. A rare wine made from few grapes was little and it has been traditionally prized as a noble wine. The sweet wine called **Sciacchetrà** is very famous. The vineyards, typical of this area, have contributed to create a unique landscape with dry-laid stone walls, winding paths, enchanting beaches between cliffs and clear waters. The terrace cultivations are characteristic of the five villages, built on narrow ribbons on the sea, defined by an unthinkable number of dry-laid stone walls. According to a study, adding the several walls, the Five Lands would be travelled by two meters high and eleven thousand kilometres (or 7000 Mi.) long wall, so extensive as to equal that of the famous Great Wall of China. Other must try local specialties are the famous Pesto sauce, honey, lemons, and anciovies.



We suggest following the itinerary: Riomaggiore, Vernazza, Monterosso and back to Riomaggiore by ferry or train.

Riomaggiore

The landscape is typically vertical and stairs and steps make up the roads. The main road is a covered canal beneath which runs the Rivus Maior stream from which the village takes its name. The housing is of the typical tower-house variety, developed on three or four floors with no more than two rooms per floor, side by side to each other in parallel rows. The building material is local: stone for the walls, slate for roofing, and yellow or pink plaster for the houses' facades. One can enter the houses both from the main entrance and from the back of the house, entering at one of the higher floors.

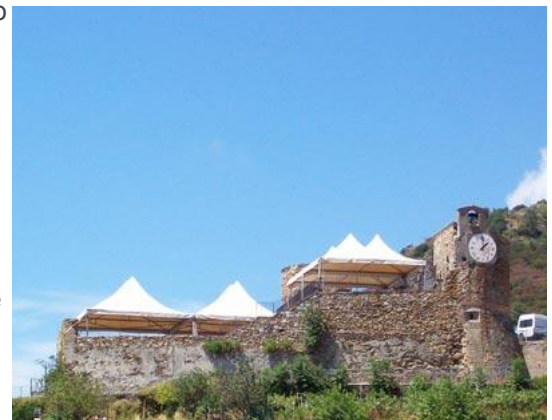
THE CHURCH OF SAN GIOVANNI BATTISTA

In the upper part of the village, the church of Saint Giovanni Battista was built in 1340 by Antonio Fieschi, bishop of Luni. A headstone in the façade remembers the construction of the Maestri Antelami. The lancet windows and the two Gothic doors adorned with anthropomorphous and zoomorphic elements and on the right side are the only elements of the original structure. In 1870 the church was widened and the façade rebuilt in neogothic style, then replacing the original rose window. The inside has three aisles, separated by ogival arches. It conserves valuable works of art as

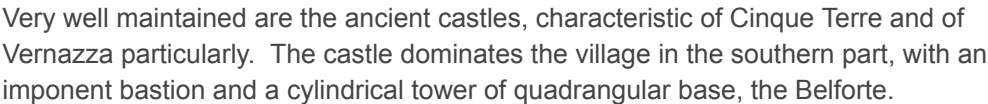
a wooden crucifix of the Maragliano, a triptych in the right aisle attributed to the Antelami and the "Baptist's Preaching" attributed to Domenico Fiasella.

THE CASTLE OF RIOMAGGIORE

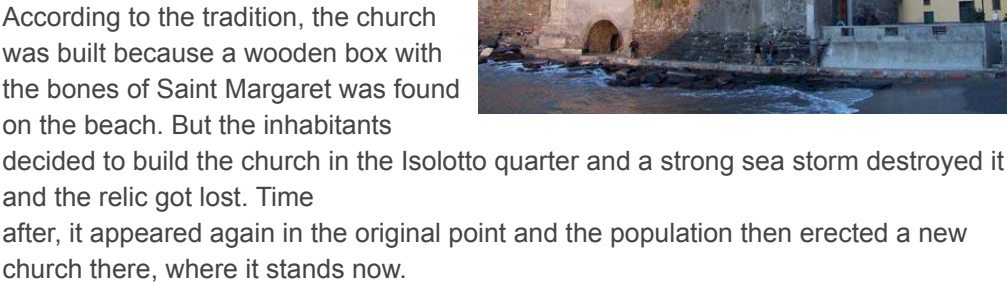
The castle of Riomaggiore dates back to the XIII century. It was built in 1260 by the marquises Turcotti, lords of Ripalta and was completed by the Genoese in the XV-XVI century. It has a quadrilateral base, its walls are surmounted by two big circular towers. In the XIX century it was turned to a cemetery and then successively restored. Today it welcomes didactic and cultural activities.



The only natural port of the Cinque Terre, the village of Vernazza develops along the Vernazzola stream (now covered) climbing up the rocky face of a cliff, which hides the view of houses to those who come at it from the sea. Very narrow, steep paths descend towards the main road which leads onto a small square located facing the small port. Along with the typical tower-shaped houses, which are also present in Riomaggiore, Manarola and Monterosso, there are more architecturally elaborate buildings decorated by portals and porticos, as a reminder of the prosperity the village once enjoyed under Genoese domination.



Constructed in 1318 in Ligurian gothic style by the Maestri Antelami, the church of Santa Margherita d'Antiochia rose on a pre-existing XI century building. It was built on a rock in front of the sea, with an impressive 40 meters belfry adorned by a pointed shape dome. It has three aisles and was widened in the XVI and XVII century.

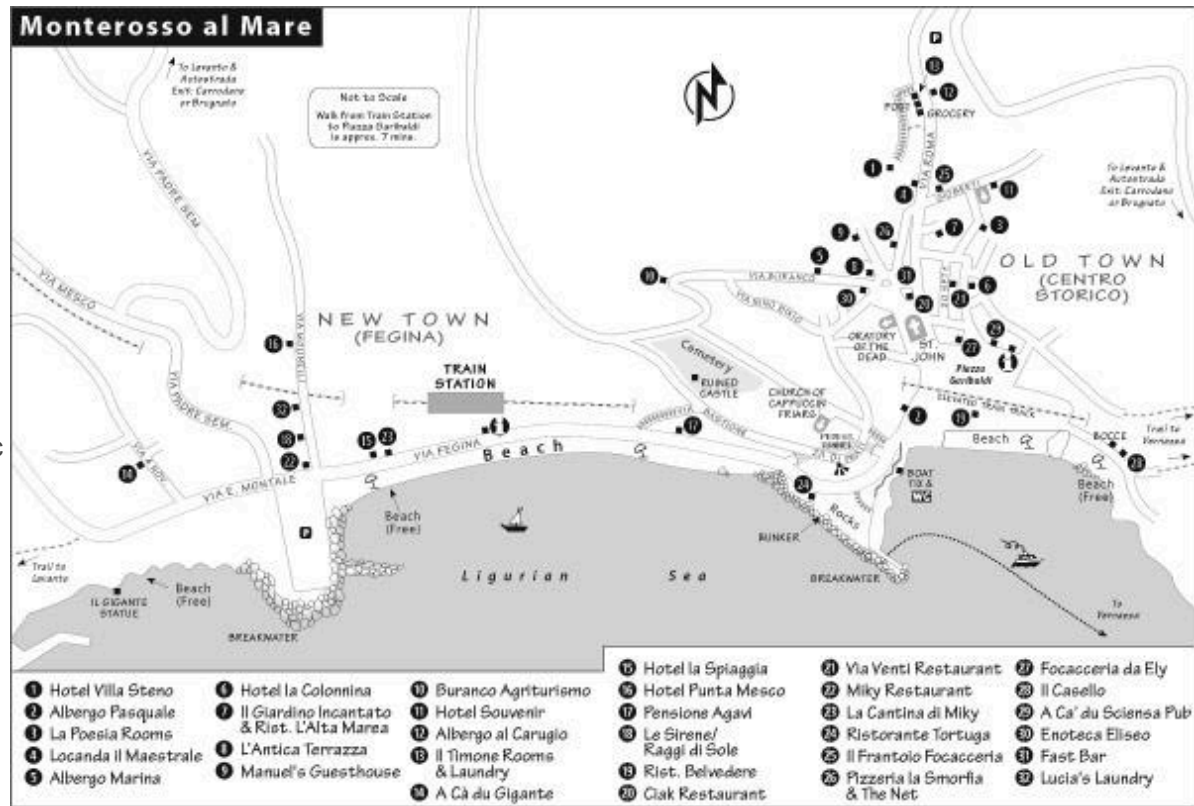


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Vernazza was already a fortified village in 1080, with the Obertenghi family, who immediately see Vernazza's strategic importance. It dominates the village in the southern part, with an imponent bastion and a cylindrical tower of quadrangular base, the Belforte.

Monterosso

Monterosso's main features are the beach and the seaside; more than the others it's a small touristic resort with some nightlife. This different feel complements the quietness of Manarola and Corniglia. Very suggestive the 'carruggi' (small streets) of Monterosso Vecchio; wide spaces and some car traffic in Fegina and on the seaside.



THE CHURCH OF SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST

The church was built between 1282 and 1307 in Romanesque-style. The beautiful façade is decorated with white and green marble. It has a pointed arch between little marble column embellished with a rose window attributed to Matteo and Pietro from Campiglio. Like the churches of Vernazza and Corniglia, the inside narrows progressively towards the entrance. The bell tower crowned by merlons was originally a medieval defensive tower with a rectangular plant in green stone.

Train schedule

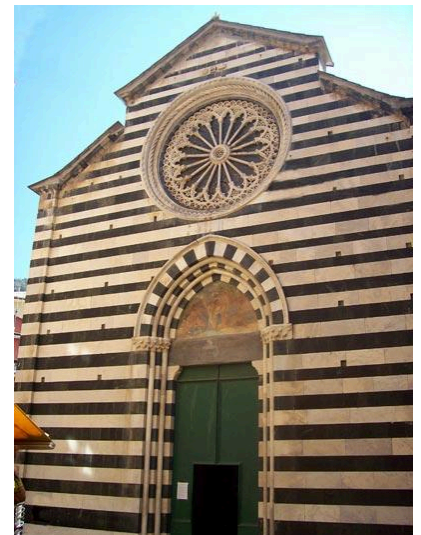
Riomaggiore -> Vernazza 10:14 (17m) , 11:19 (13m) , 12:09 (10m)

Vernazza -> Monterosso 11:33, 12:20, 13:35 (4 min)

Monterosso -> Riomaggiore 13:57 (19m), 14:20 (18m), 14:44(8m)

Monterosso -> La Spezia 14:44 (15 min), 15:03(16m), 15:23 (26m), 15:43 (17m)

Misc: Riomaggiore Info point: Tel: 0187-920633. [Ferry boat schedule and costs.](#)



Manarola

A village of ancient origins found by the inhabitants of the (probably Roman) Volastra settlement. Manarola, like the other Cinque Terre villages, is known for its tower-houses; the layout of the village develops around the subsurface course of the Groppo stream which marks out its main axis. From the sunken stream a series of narrow stone-paved streets lead off towards houses and vegetable gardens on both sides of the cape. Above the houses there lies an interesting square in which all the religious buildings are located. Manarola has to be considered the quietest of the five towns. Even in full season one can always appreciate the peacefulness of its streets and the relaxing walks on the short paths surrounding the village.

A 'must see' is the big illuminated Nativity on the hill in front of the houses: more than 200 figures and 12.000 lamps for the biggest lighted nativity in the world! It remains lighted from December 8th till the end of January.



NOTE: on a short shore excursion day trip, we do not suggest stopping in MANarola as there would not be enough time.

Porto Venere

2 - Tower Capitolare: Stands to the left of the entrance to via Capellini. Its walls are faced with ashlar-work, each dressed stone is slightly blunted. Openings to the first few floors are enriched by mullioned windows and windows with tree lights.

4 - Carugio or Via Capellini: Main street to the village

8 - Square Spallanzani: Centre of the early-roman establishment of the "castrum Vetus". The square is at present named after the biologist and naturalist L. Spallanzani (1729 - 1799), who spent a long time in Porto Venere in 1783. During his stay he carefully examined and furthered his studies on the formation of strata in the local territory.



9 - Church of S. Pietro: The church of S. Pietro: According to some archaeologists, during pagan times the site used to be a temple to Venus Erycina (From which the name Portus Veneris derives). The temple was then transformed during the first years of Christianity into a Christian temple. In 1256 ad. The Genoese built the church of S. Pietro over the early Christian temple, to thank the inhabitants of Porto Venere for their help in taking Lerici castle. They followed a new style known as gothic-genoesse.

10 - Church of S. Lorenzo: Its Romanesque facade was built by the famous Magistri Antelami between 1116 and 1130. Over 868 years after



its opening, the church has maintained its ancestral structure of a nave and two aisles.