

# Liguria - Love at First Sight



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-  Seaside emotions
-  Art Settings
-  History Trail
-  Scents and flavours
-  Sports itineraries
-  A sea of gardens



Sea

Seaside emotions



Gourmet Food and Wine

Scents and flavours



Art and Culture

Art Settings

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Active Holidays

Sports Itineraries



Liguria  
Little Towns

History Trail



Villas and Gardens

A sea of gardens

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### Publishing Info

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## Seaside emotions.

Sailing, windsurf, kitesurf, diving, whale watching, or simply sunbathing: there are hundreds of sea adventures in a holiday on the Riviera.

A holiday in Liguria sounds like a sweet blue rhapsody, a musical whirl of saltiness, foam, and wind. Spend a day in a boat, sailing from a hidden bay to a little romantic marina, or plunge in the underwater gardens of the **Isle of Gallinara**, in the **Marine Reserves of Portofino** and **Bergeggi** or **Cinque Terre**; let expert biologists help you meet the giant creatures in the "**Sanctuary of cetaceans**", or just sunbathe in one of the many beaches signposted with blue flags, guarantee of clear waters and environmental friendly policy. Here everything's possible - you may even come across a penguin or a shark underneath the big windows of the **Aquarium of Genoa**, the biggest and most visited aquarium in Italy, which was built by the famous Italian architect Renzo Piano.



Sestri Levante

## Places: a Combination of Different Feelings from Earth, Sky, and Sea.

### Cinque Terre and Golfo dei Poeti.

You can either choose to go on a ferry or to walk, in any case Cinque Terre and Golfo dei Poeti will reveal breathtaking landscapes no matter the season. While you walk along the blue path, linking **Riomaggiore** to **Monterosso**, passing through **Vernazza** - a town founded around the year one thousand - and through **Corniglia** - with its wonderful church of San Pietro, built in Ligurian Gothic style - you will feel in tune with the surrounding nature, and breath the scents of the Mediterranean maquis vineyards and shrubs. While you stroll along the romantic path called "Via dell'Amore", above the cliffs leading to **Manarola**, you will feel like every day is Valentine's day. Not to mention the charming beauty of **Porto Venere**, the farthest western spot of the Gulf, with its fortress-houses, its multicoloured rocks, the seagulls flying to the Island of **Palmaria** - frequently linked to the inland by many ferryboats.



Lerici - Baia Blu



Camogli

Golfo dei Poeti



### Tigullio and Genovesato.

From **Sestri Levante** to **Santa Margherita Ligure**:

the history of seaside tourism originated along these beaches. **Portofino**, the favourite glamour destination of the international jet-set, is so fascinating with its small roads, crammed with multicoloured houses, and with its little square where anyone can pretend to be a celebrity, for once at least.

Like every little sea town, **Moneglia** too features its medieval main street, called **caruggio** - once crossed by farmers, fishermen, merchants, and pilgrims - and today a luxurious commercial area where you can go for a walk after a day spent on the sand, and browse in the lively stores along the road.

Artistic souvenir lovers and those seeking for authentic atmospheres will have to stop in the lace shops of **Rapallo** or in the craftsman shops of **Chiavari**. Life flows nicely in the Tigullio area. Here top level hospitality combines with the charm and warmth of the sea waters; the lively city centres are in tune with the quiet of the Medieval town of **Lavagna** and with the beauty of **Sestri Levante**, sitting between two enchanted bays, Baia del Silenzio and Baia delle Favole: the perfect dream setting!

Genovesato is an area full of precious hidden treasures. **Camogli** for example, a little harbour sparkling like a jewel in the Golfo Paradiso, with the multicoloured boats, and houses, is still a lively fishermen village: the ideal choice to spend a whole morning in a secluded beach far from the crowd, walking among the fishermen while they're hauling their nets. An afternoon tour to the **San Fruttuoso** Abbey, which mirrors itself in the clear sea waters among the rocks of a small bay is hard to forget. Moving to another Riviera, the scenery changes completely: during the day, just relax and pamper yourself in the hotels along the beach of **Cogoleto** and **Arenzano**, and at sunset why not enjoy the party atmosphere, dancing bare foot on the sand?

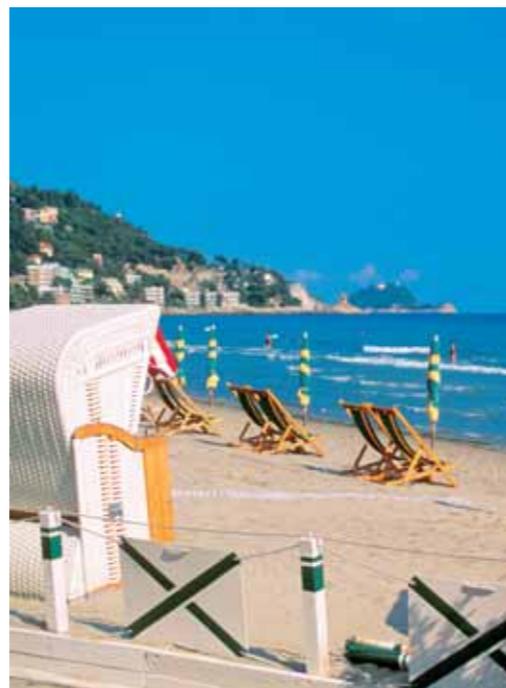
### Riviera delle Palme.

The three kilometres of incredibly fine sand and exceptional currents of **Varazze** make this little town a surfers' paradise, also attracting canoe, sailing and water ski enthusiasts. If you'd like to treasure a piece of this beautiful land, just spend some time in the **Albisole** (**Marina** and **Superiore**), the renowned towns of pottery and multicoloured masterpieces. Little towns perched up on the mountains and majestic castles are the typical feature along the territory of **Loano** and **Pietra Ligure**, where an underground heritage of 50 natural caves form the geological area known as caves of **Toirano** and **Borgio Verezzi**.

In the Finalese area, only a few kilometres away from Savona, the city of **Bergeggi** and its little isle - now a natural reserve - stand out along the coastal line that stretches from **Spotorno** to **Noli**; furthermore, **Finale Ligure**, with its beautiful sandy shores, smells like sea salt and exhales a medieval spirit from the fortresses built by the Del Carretto family in their Marquisate. Light coloured houses, lemon and olive trees are the characteristic feature of **Varigotti**, a very appreciated location by the celebrities looking for some rest and privacy. For those looking for a breathtaking vertical perspective **Capo Noli** is the ideal place, with its white limestone walls falling sheer to the Beach called "Spiaggia dei Saraceni". The name Baia del Sole, which means Sun Bay, is most appropriate for the **Albenga** tourist resorts, formed by the central island of **Gallinara**, and then **Alassio**, **Laigueglia** and **Andora**, all famous for their wide beaches and for the shady little roads unwinding in the town's characteristic alleys, called **budelli**.



Ventimiglia



Alassio

#### Riviera dei Fiori.

The far end of the Liguria region, at the border with France, is always surprising with its lively coastal villages and its quiet little towns, from **Balzi Rossi** to **Bordighera**, from **Arma di Taggia** to **San Lorenzo al Mare**, from **Imperia** to **Cervo**, passing through **Diano Marina** and **San Bartolomeo**. The atmosphere longed for by foreign visitors in their Grand Tours centuries ago, is always there, with its warmth, its landscapes, and the scent of beautiful gardens. Thinking of **Sanremo** it's the renowned Italian Song Festival that comes to mind. However this city and the neighbouring towns deserve applause all year long. Just think of the two 16th century Saracen Towers in the nearby **Ospedaletti**.

A hint of the unusual can be found in **Bussana Vecchia**, the artists' town; and if you head in a North-easterly direction you will find Golfo Dianese, a wide gulf between **Capo Berta** and **Capo Cervo**, immersed in vegetation made of palms, agaves, and citrus orchards.



## Art Settings.

A holiday like a work of art among archaeological sites, museums, abbeys, churches, and medieval little towns.

Main streets called *caruggi*, precious marble, heavenly mansions, monuments, and castles... these and many more are very good reasons to choose a holiday where you can discover the cultural heritage of Liguria. Going back in time to the ancient origins of a millenary civilisation, one comes across the graffiti of our ancestors who used to live in the caves called **Balzi Rossi** and **Toirano**. 130 sanctuaries, small churches and abbeys like the ones of **Borzone**, **Tiglieto** or **San Pietro in Varatella** are a precious spiritual heritage. Sacred buildings of various styles - early Medieval, Romanesque and Gothic - are only a few of the wonders scattered along the entire region: from the church of S. Pietro, laying on top of the *promontory of Porto Venere*, to the abbey of **San Fruttuoso di Camogli** and the many churches hidden along the Genoa alleys. Villas, gardens, and luxurious palaces, that served once as summer residences of noble families, now attest to the rich oligarchy which, from the 16th century, jealously collected precious art pieces, now on display for the general public.



Vallecrosia



Palazzo Gavotti - Savona

## Liguria: an Open Air Museum.

### Genoa Art City.

Host in the occasion of the 500th anniversary of Columbus discovery of America in 1992, European Capital for Culture in 2004, with some of its buildings added to the list of UNESCO World Heritage sites ... the CV of the Ligurian capital city leaves no room for doubt: Genoa needs to be seen and experienced. Discover it through its alleys going down from Castelletto's highs (from where you can enjoy a wonderful vista of the city) to the **Old Harbour**, today a sunny square on the water designed by Architect Renzo Piano, where you can see the **Bigo**, a kind of ancient-modern lift, the so called **Magazzini del Cotone**, important **Congress Centre**, the world famous **Aquarium** and the **Galata Maritime Museum**. In the heart of the historic centre, among the intertwined medieval structure of narrow alleys, is the monumental street **Strada Nuova**, currently called **Via Garibaldi**, which was built in 1550 to link and reach the luxurious buildings belonging to the powerful ruling class of Genoa. These buildings host prestigious art collections: **Palazzo Rosso** and **Palazzo Bianco** are two unique buildings worth seeing. Other important treasures to be visited are the national galleries of **Palazzo Spinola di Pellicceria** and **Palazzo Reale** in Via Balbi.

Passing from the Renaissance and Genovese Baroque to the modern and contemporary art collections, the ideal itinerary goes to the eastern end of the city, in the Nervi area, where vast parks - that are separated from the sea by the famous walk "Anita Garibaldi" - frame four art galleries: the **GAM, Modern Art Gallery** opened in the year of culture; the prestigious Collection **Wolfsoniana**, which opened on December 2005; **Villa Grimaldi**, featuring the Frugone collections; and finally the **Luxoro Museum**, an 18th century Patrician house.

### Underwater Treasures.

It would be impossible to make a complete list of the points of interest scattered throughout the territory. Let's just mention one magical, rather unknown place worth visiting: the stronghold called **Fortezza del Priamar** located in **Savona**, is a monumental complex where Medieval, Byzantine, and Pre-Roman architecture meet.

Another valuable cultural experience can be found at the **Lia Museum**, in **La Spezia**. This museum hosts the collection of a business man from Apulia who officially became a resident of La Spezia. The collection includes all kinds of art pieces, like miniatures, majolica, archaeological finds, and paintings by Tintoretto, Titian, Raphael, Contorno, and Lorenzetti.

In the opposite end of Liguria, **Imperia** preserves its double nature, with its two ancient cores, **Oneglia** and **Porto Maurizio** - the first a modern centre famous for its oil culture, the second a historical centre, located high on the hill behind the sea, the famous Parasio.

Old Harbour - Genoa





Genoa Boat Show - Genoa



Euroflora - Genoa

#### Liguria Live: a Region for Festivals.

Liguria offers shows and festivals for all tastes. The most important maritime show is the **Boat Show** based in the Genoa Exhibition Centre, which has now doubled its evocative exhibition space on the water, with over 2,600 boats on display, together with all the novelties of the sector.

The **Science Festival** is also an important visitors attraction. Scientific workshops, round tables, performances, films, visual installations, and tastings are organised to tell the general public about the mysteries, discoveries, and issues of an ever more fascinating and controversial world.

The taste of seafood at **Slow Fish**, becomes an exhibition dedicated to sustainable fish practices, which takes place in **Genoa**, on odd years only, and is organised by Slow Food and the Liguria Region. Many initiatives offer cuisine workshops, fish tasting, and of course stalls with the best of fish produce for sale.

Once every five years, at springtime, Liguria becomes Europe's blossoming garden with **Euroflora**, whereas in the summer **Youth**

**festivals** are continuously increasing, along with **theatre performances under the stars**.

The most famous event of the Italian music scene, the **Festival of Sanremo**, always proves to be very popular, providing Riviera dei Fiori with an international audience.

#### Once upon a time.

Slow movements, expert hands, ancient know-how ... a Ligurian craftsman working in his own workshop is a step back in time. The city of **Campo Ligure** is renowned for the manufacturing of filigree, **Altare** is the glass city, and slate takes a new look in **Val Fontanabuona**.

Exceptional lace is made in **Chiavari**, while in **Zoagli** luxurious damask and velvet are produced, and in **Albisola** pottery rises like a phoenix from expertly handled blocks of clay.



# History Trail.

A short walk along the edge of time among the little ancient towns of Liguria's memory.

Other than the show of the sea - continuously eroding, shaping and - Liguria offers another present to all its visitors, the magic of the historical little towns, still untouched and real, where life tastes like it used to do in the past, and people are genuinely welcoming.

Beneath the medieval walls, up on the hill ridges, you will find the perfect landscapes for your pictures: **Dolceacqua**, **Apricale**, the artists' town, **Triora**, the mysterious stronghold haunted by witches, **Sassello**, with its green chestnuts woods, up to **Brugnato**, famous for its 7th century Benedictine abbey.



Dolceacqua



Castelvecchio di Rocca Barbena



## Inland: Four Seasons in One Short Break - from Beach Relax to Winter Excursions.

The inland little towns are fairytale worlds, precious spots hidden among the hills and the sea, all linked by myth. In the province of Savona once upon a time, and still now, **Castelvecchio di Rocca Barbena** was there with its magnificent stone arches; heading West to East along the Riviera in the heart of the Natural Park of Aveto, sits the little town of **Santo Stefano d'Aveto** inside the 13th century Malaspina Castle, and later the residence of the Doria family.

For those looking for authentic flavours, Valle del Biologico located in the city of **Varese Ligure** is the right place to stop, with its characteristic houses radiating off from the market square. And you can end this quick overview in **Castelnuovo Magra**, where the very first wine shop of the Region was opened.

Albenga



## The Magic of an Embrace of Houses and Churches: the Little Towns Reflecting off the Sea.

These towns built above the sea attest to the victory of man over nature - little islands of stone and colours.

From the eastern side **Montemarcello** guards the **Gulf of La Spezia** and the valley of **Val Magra**, from above.

Words are not enough to describe the wonder of **Manarola**, **Vernazza** and **Tellaro**.

Heading West, the ancient Maritime Republic of **Noli**, in the province of Savona, can not be missed; and finally **Cervo**, in the Imperia province, concludes our itinerary.

## Little Towns and Villages like Beauty Queens.

Many **Orange Flags** wave above the Ligurian towns, flags that represent the beauties signposted by the Region and the Italian Touring Club. Furthermore, many municipalities have been listed among the **Most Beautiful Italian Little Towns**, for their harmonic architecture, their building heritage, and the quality of life.

## Scents and flavours.

From the Wood, the Garden, and the Sea -  
a Taste of Ligurian Gastronomy - Shades of Flavours from Green to Blue.

A natural amphitheatre hidden among the Alps, the Apennines and the sea, Liguria has a wide variety of produce to offer - a range of flavours from the fruits of the earth, to the fresh catch from the sea, through fragrant bakery products.

Every single municipality here has its own speciality to offer, every single city a recipe to discover in a gastronomic odyssey across wine shops, oil mills, restaurants, farm holidays where you can find all sorts of dishes, from **cappon magro**, a fine triumph of fish, to **panissa** made of chickpeas, from **cima** cooked in Genoese fashion, perfect marriage of meat and vegetables, to **trofie al pesto**, a traditional pasta dish!



Lemons

## The Best Dishes of a Region with a Taste for Food.

### Oil Masterpieces.

Ligurian Extra Virgin Olive Oil, labelled DOP (Protected Designation of Origin), transforms every dish into a sumptuous experience. Yellow-greenish in colour, with a fruity smell, but not too strong - it is not just a salad dressing.

### White and Red Wines.

Ligurian wine brands are a miracle of the farming tradition, which was able to plant vineyards in the rock, thanks to gravity challenging terraces. From **Rossese of Dolceacqua** to **Sciachetrà of Cinque Terre** - a wine made from dried grapes -, from **Ormeasco of Pornassio** to **Vermentino of Colli di Luni**: the entire region toasts to fine wines.



Farinata

### Liguria Leaves: Basil.

The true king of the local gastronomy is **pesto**, the traditional dressing for pasta dishes made from tender basil leaves and pine nuts pressed with wooden pestles in marble mortars, and finally seasoned with pecorino cheese and extra virgin olive oil. More than just a dish - a tradition!

### Focaccia and Farinata.

The Ligurian "street-food" is called **Farinata** - thin and fragrant, this savoury pie is made from chickpeas flour, olive oil, salt, and water. It tastes best warm, taken off a wood-oven. Another delicatessen is "**a fugassa**", local name for the Genoese Focaccia, thin and warm, always a pleasure to eat, while in Recco the same product comes stuffed with soft stracchino cheese between two thin pastry layers. Love at first bite



Corzetti del Levante Ligure

### La Dolce Vita.

Genoese Christmas Pandolce, **Amaretti from Sassello**, **Gobelletti from Rapallo**, **canestrelli from Torriglia**, **baci from Alassio**, **cubàite from Apricale** and **Spungata from Sarzana**, sugar almonds, fondants, wafers and much more. And last but not least, patisserie specialities you simply can't resist, perfect to end a sumptuous meal.

Grape Harvest - Cinque Terre



## Unique Dishes... with Slow Food Distinction.

Food to celebrate tradition, to be slowly savoured around the table: these are the characteristics that Slow Food has awarded 11 traditional local products, ancient specialities, memory of the past with names like **Anchovies of Monterosso, Garlic of Vessalico, Violet Asparagus of Albenga, Tecci-Dried Chestnuts of Calizzano and Murialdo, Chinotto of Savona, Ciccirelli** (small fish) **of Noli, Green Beans of Badalucco, Conio and Pigna, the Classic Genoese Focaccia, the wine Sclacchetrà of Cinque Terre, Rose Syrup** and a sheep cheese variety called **Tome di pecora brigasca.**

Traditional "toma" and other cheese

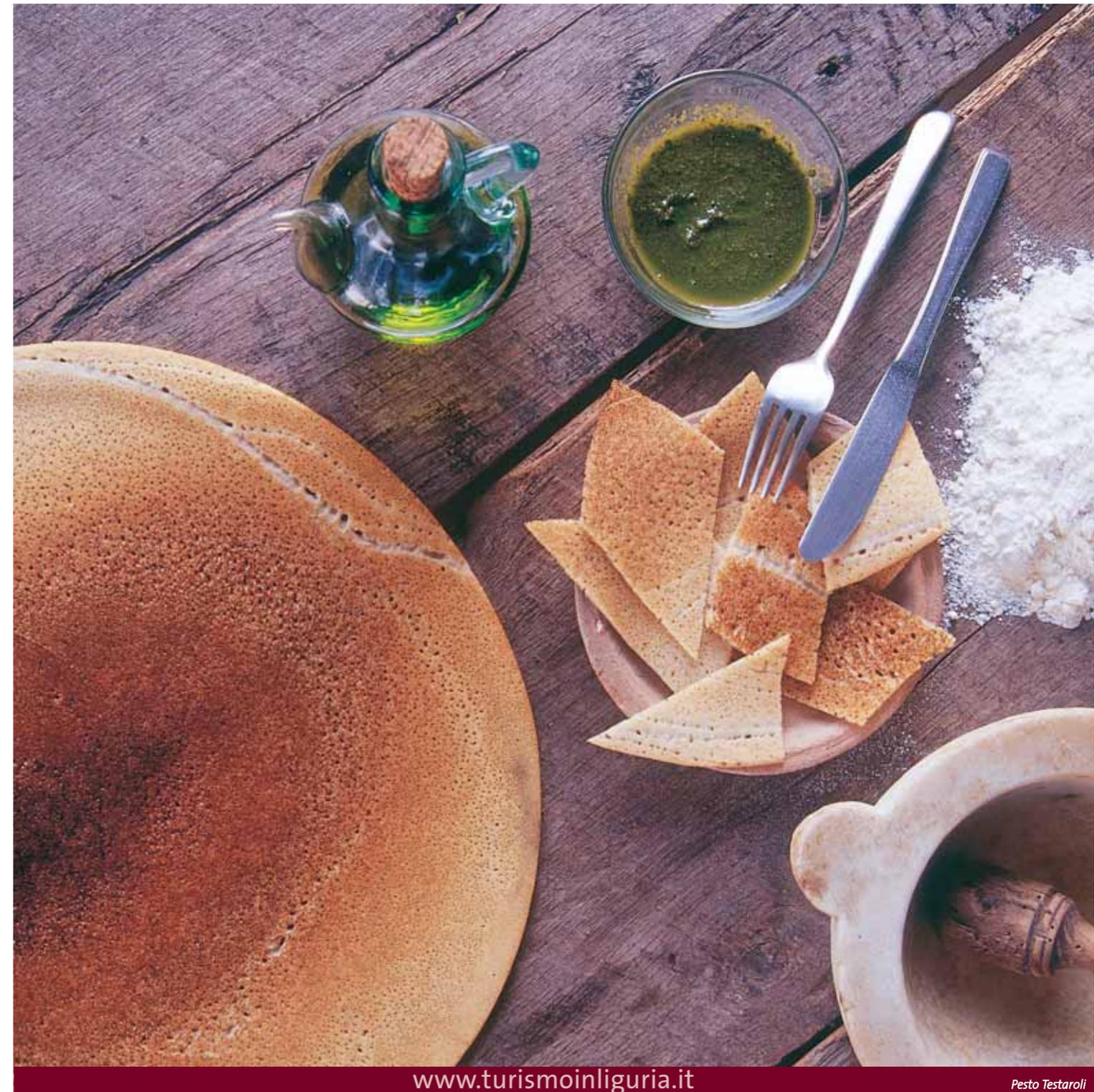


## Sunday Meal.

A holiday in Liguria is a superior experience, mainly for those who like to plunge into the memory of such a deep-rooted gastronomic tradition. There are so many recipes handed down from generation to generation, like the anchovies speciality called **bagnùn di acciughe**, to be served with toasted bread as a starter, and **trofie al pesto**, a classic pasta dish to indulge in, which may be enriched with potatoes and green beans to go with the traditional curly pasta.

Another speciality is the **stoccafisso alla Badalucchese**, a triumph of dried cod, cooked with pine nuts, mushrooms, hazelnuts, amaretti, olives and walnuts. The typical Christmas dish is called **cappon magro**, a modified version of an ancient 16th century recipe, made from layers of bread, softened in vinegar water, alternated with layers of fish and boiled vegetables, and seasoned with a green sauce. Today this dish is eaten in the characteristic cone shape, garnished with scampi and prawns: a real pleasure for the eye and the palate. A special mention goes to **testaroli**, locally known as **testaieu**. The origin of this dish is very ancient, the ancient Romans seemed to appreciate it already. It is made from flour, salt and water, which are then cooked in a cast iron pan called "testo", composed of a circular flat base and a cone-shaped lid. Once cooked, the little pastries are cut into small squares, boiled in water and dressed with pesto, cheese or sauces.

In Genoa Christmas mostly means **Pandolce genovese**. Historically the soft pastry was garnished with zibibbo liqueur, pine nuts and candied fruit. Traditionally, Pandolce was served at the end of the Advent meal: according to tradition the youngest in the family served it to the other members and the oldest made portions out of it.



## Sports Itineraries.

### A Holiday "Andante con Brio": Liguria is Beauty on the Move.

Before leaving for a holiday in Liguria you must remember to put flippers, swimming suit, and tanning lotion in your suitcase, but it's not enough. Nature and outdoor sports lovers will also have to add trekking shoes, golf bag, bicycle, diving mask and snorkel, etc. and everything you may need for an active holiday in a region which is a real open air gym.

When you say Liguria, you mean pure excitement along the bike trails and the walking itineraries which climb up the Alps and Apennines, extreme thrills upon the climbers' rock walls, satisfaction to roll your golf ball into the hole in the local courses, complete freedom to sail across a peaceful sea.



Windsurf - Isola della Gallinara



## Exercise Body and Soul: Liguria Means Wellness Training.

### Step by Step.

The Ligurian region is shaped like a thin half-moon, and is a rainbow of landscapes and paths for those who enjoy trekking. The main itinerary is the so called **Alta Via**, with its 400 km stretching from **Ventimiglia** to **Sarzana**, the ideal choice for long walk excursion or for a few hours back horse riding itineraries. In between you can stop to rest in mountain refuges or in farm holiday centres, to recharge with tasty snacks or delicious dinners made out of local traditional dishes.

A well deserved culinary break to recover from a tiring outdoor adventure.

### Cycling across Beauty.

Cycling in Liguria in the sun is a great experience you can't miss. Street cycling, mountain biking, cyclo-tourism and downhill cycling, there are more than 400 itineraries for you to choose from in the area.

### Sea and Wind.

Diving available 10 months per year, 70 diving schools, 22,000 boat spaces, sailing schools in every sea resort, 80 yacht charter specialists, beaches for surf and windsurf: you choose - the sea is there for you to enjoy!

### Hole out!

11 golf courses, 4 of which with 18 holes: Liguria is a green dream among the hills and the sea - **Sanremo**, **Castellaro**, **Albisola Superiore**, **Garlenda**, **Cogoleto**, **Arenzano**, **Genoa**, **Quarto Alto**, **Rapallo**, **Lerici** and **Sarzana**. are the places to go.

A wide variety to choose from - clubs with restaurants, club houses, terraces to relax in the Mediterranean shade.

### Highs Emotion.

Liguria is a paradise for free-climbers seeking to win their personal challenge. With more than 5,000 tracks equipped for climbing, the area between **Finale Ligure**, **Albenga** and **Toirano** is one of the best in Europe for number of cliffs. **Muzzerone** in **Porto Venere**, is well worth a visit, with its sheer walls plummeting into the sea.



Free Ride - Sanremo



Kayak along the River

#### Along the Rivers.

Descend across cascades and falls, along arduous mountain streams, narrow natural slides, and end up diving in crystal clear waters: canyoning in Liguria is always an adventure, especially in **Val di Vara**, a valley also known as Valle del Biologico, not far from **Cinque Terre**, and in the valleys of **Nervia** and **Argentina** at the other end of the region.

#### Volare.

Fly from the hills to the sea: it is now possible thanks to the many paragliding and hang gliding centres, from **Spotorno** to **Sanremo**, from **Torre del Mare** to **Genoa** and **Vado Ligure**.

#### White Liguria:

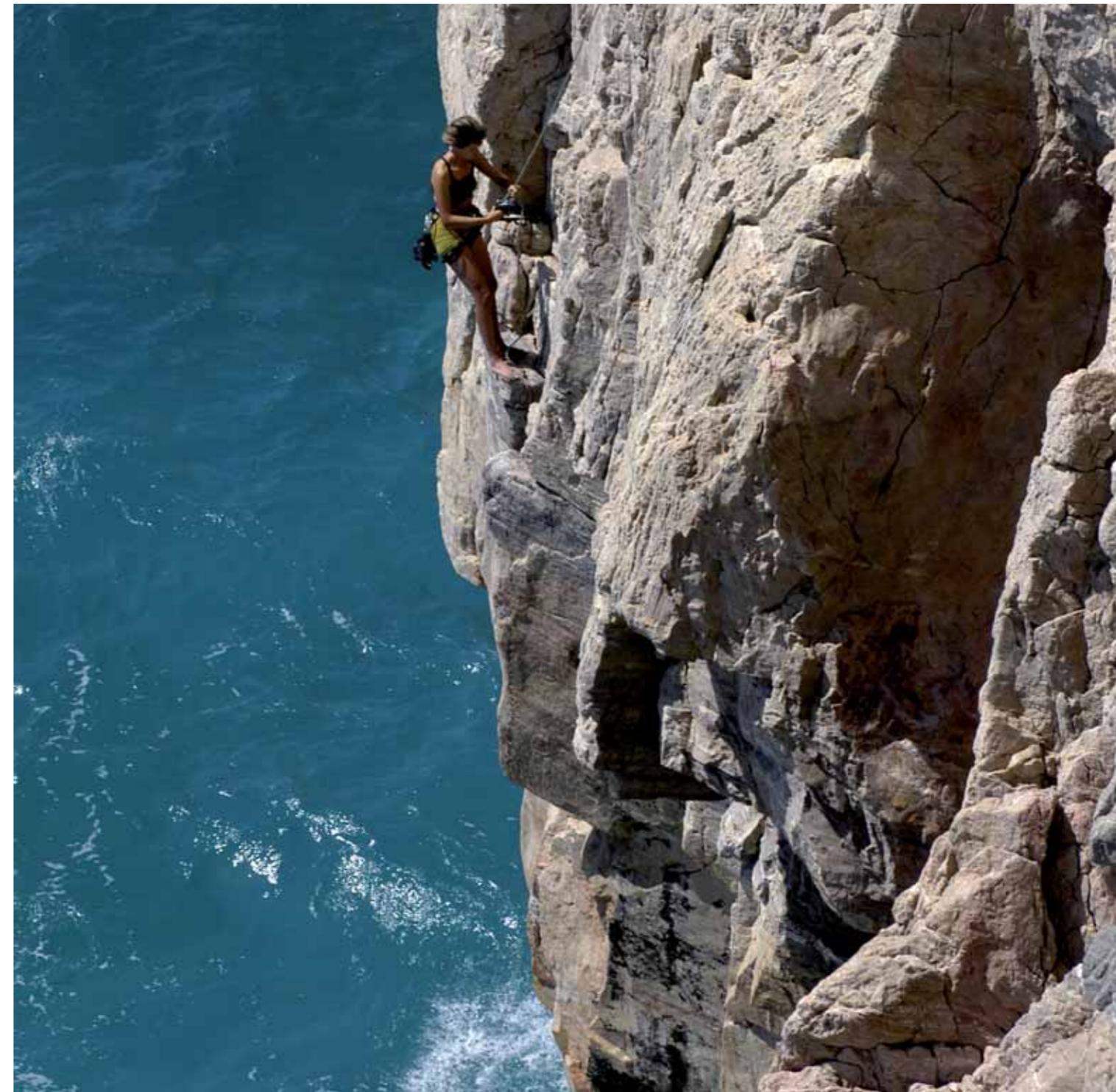
Not many know that ... it does snow in Liguria!  
When winter comes the tops of the Apennines are covered in snow: the ideal setting for long walks on snowshoes, or for ski mountaineering. From the Apennines it's even possible to see the Alps on clear winter days - and they look so close that you think you might touch them!  
For extreme sports lovers: there's even the chance of climbing on icefalls in **Val d'Aveto**, why not have a go?

#### Fishing and Touring Itineraries.

Something different, immersed in nature, an experience to share with the whole family: an original idea that makes you feel like you were one of those experienced seamen, living and eating with them on the boat, and learning about the fish fauna and their ancient fishing techniques.

#### On the Side of the Environment: Parks and Sea Reserves.

60,000 hectares of parks and reserves, a natural treasure stretching across 12% of the regional territory. Liguria protects its natural riches and its bio-diversity, supporting eco-tourism IT'S pure beauty, authentic, and waiting to be lived.  
With excursions and walks to discover intact landscapes, woods, and valleys, but also to discover towns where tradition is still alive, like the (**National Park of Cinque Terre**, and the **Regional Natural Parks of Porto Venere**, **Montemarcello Magra**, **Aveto**, **Portofino**, **Antola**, **Beigua**, **Bric Tana** and **Piana Crixia** and of the **Ligurian Alps**).  
Love for the earth and love for the sea come together - Ligurian sea treasures are preserved in the sea reserves of Portofino, Bergoggi and Cinque Terre.



## A sea of gardens.

With Its Heritage of Villas and Flowers, Liguria Nurtures Tradition in Its Gardens and Regional Parks.

From the botanical gardens of *Villa Hanbury* in the city of *Ventimiglia* to *Villa Marigola* located in *Lerici*, through *Villa Faraggiana* in *Albissola*, *Villa Durazzo* in *Santa Margherita*, *Villa Serra* di *Comago* in *Val Polcevera*, and the *Parks of Nervi* in *Genoa* eastern area, *Villa Durazzo Pallavicini* with its beautiful itinerary, and through the wonderful *Cervara* on the promontory of *Portofino*.

These are just some of the 26 villas and gardens associated to the theme itinerary called "Un mare di giardini" (a sea of gardens), which have all many things in common - flowers, plants and the beauty of gardens where to spend vivid colourful moments, because here everyday can be a spring day.



Villa Faraggiana - Albissola







*Villa Hanbury - Ventimiglia*

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