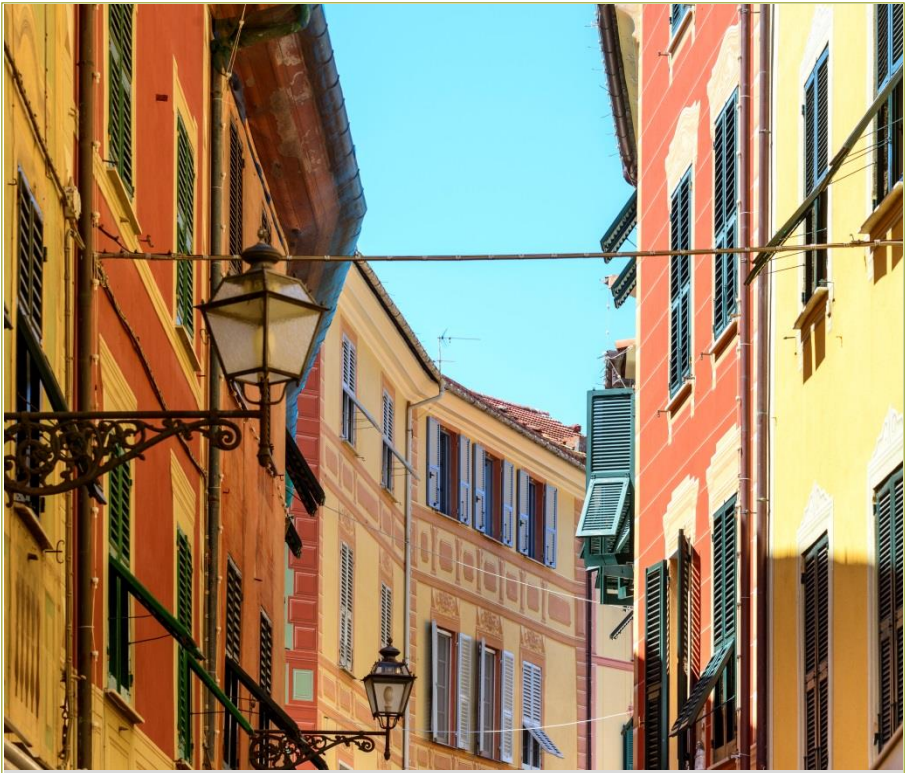


ITALY

# Genoa & the Cinque Terre

A Self-Guided Walking Adventure





# Table of Contents

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Daily Itinerary .....	4
Itinerary Overview .....	10
Tour Facts at a Glance.....	11
Traveling To and From Your Tour .....	14
Information & Policies .....	18
Italy at a Glance .....	20
Packing List .....	25

## Travel Style

Our Self-Guided Walking Adventures are ideal for travelers with an independent spirit who enjoy exploring at their own pace. We provide authentic accommodations, luggage transfers, and some meals, along with comprehensive route notes, detailed maps, and 24-hour emergency assistance. This gives you the freedom to focus on the things that matter to you—with no group, no guide, and no set schedule to stand in the way of enjoying your adventure, your way.



## Overview

The Cinque Terre—the incredible piece of Mediterranean coast made up of five coastal towns clinging between mountains and sea and connected by ancient trails—is just one part of the magnificent Italian Riviera to explore on this self-guided walking tour. Starting in the multifaceted and ancient city of Genoa, a busy port even for the Phoenicians and Ancient Greeks, and finishing in the Cinque Terre National Park, in between is some of Italy’s most alluring coastal scenery—jet-setting Portofino and the natural parks of both Portofino and Punta Manara. Walks take you to stunning viewpoints: windswept capes or high ridge tops where terraced hillsides unfold down to colorful villages perched on rocky shores. Frequent local trains and ferryboats facilitate a flexible itinerary—combine invigorating walks, a harborside stroll, a dip in the sea, or a pause in an ancient chapel. Boutique hotels and a family-run inn offer charm and views to match Liguria’s famously mouthwatering cuisine—pesto over homemade pasta, fragrant herb-topped focaccia, and some of Italy’s best-prepared seafood.



# Daily Itinerary

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## DAY 1

### Arrival in Genoa

You arrive in the port city of Genoa, where you make your way to your centrally located hotel. With its storied history—rivaling that of Venice—of Mediterranean rule from the Middle Ages through the 16th century, Genoa’s wealth and importance are evident throughout. The city’s magnificent medieval cathedral and Renaissance palaces—the Palazzi dei Rolli—a collection of 42 stunning buildings in the city’s historical center, have been designated a UNESCO World Heritage site in their entirety. Following an orientation meeting, a short walk from your hotel brings you to a favorite local restaurant for dinner.

### Hotel Bristol Palace, Genoa

Located in Genoa’s historic center, the Hotel Bristol Palace is an elegant four-star hotel evoking the grand hotels of the 19th century—recently fully renovated. Classic decor greets you from the large foyer and sophisticated entrance bar and is continued into guestrooms featuring hardwood or tiled floors, traditional furnishings and artwork, and muted pastel colors. A fine-dining restaurant and “White” bar are located on the second floor. Just steps from the Ducal Palace and the Carlo Felice Theatre, you can also easily walk to the city’s museums,

restaurants and cafés, and the Old Port area with its aquarium, Renzo Piano-designed Bigo elevator, and pirate ship.

## DAY 2

Gulf of Paradise; 2.5 miles, easy to moderate, 750-ft. elevation gain and loss. Camogli and/or Genoa exploration



This first walk on the itinerary takes you outside Genoa to the western side of the Natural Park of Portofino, the peninsula south of the city reaching into the Mediterranean to form the Gulf of Paradise. A very short train ride (approximately 25 minutes) takes you from Genoa to the fishing port town of Camogli, where you head out on a steep brick path to reach one of the park's main gates in the tiny hamlet of San Rocco—one of the best vantage points in the area, with stunning views of the coast and distant mountains. From there, you descend a panoramic walkway through lush gardens and elegant villas to the seaside at Punta Chiappa, a unique geological formation jutting into the water. You can find a scenic picnic spot not far from fishermen's nets, or opt to dine at a seaside trattoria, before returning to Camogli by boat. You may then choose to explore charming Camogli with its medieval tower and Baroque church, or catch the train directly back to Genoa. Continuing your visit of Genoa, you may choose to ride the historical funicular that climbs to the city's 17th-century defensive city walls. For dinner, choose from the many restaurants in the city's historical center.

## Hotel Bristol Palace, Genoa

## DAY 3

Punta Manara; 4 miles, easy to moderate, 750-ft. elevation gain and loss. Sestri Levante exploration

You depart Genoa today and transfer about 30 miles south along the coast to the town of Sestri Levante. An ancient port and trading center, the town is a small peninsula that was actually once an island before being connected to the mainland in Roman times. The walk today takes you from the town center to the Cape of Punta Manara, providing views along the way of its two beautiful gulfs: the Bay of Silence and the Bay of Fables, named for Hans Christian Andersen, who lived here for a short time in the 1830s. The route ascends the cape along

an old mule track that turns to dirt with a few short steep parts, emerging at the promontory with a small medieval tower and gorgeous coastal views. You can return via a trail through typical Mediterranean flora and forest of pine and oak, or retrace your steps to enjoy the panorama in the opposite direction. Once back in Sestri Levante, there are many options—a stroll along the main promenade overlooking the Portofino Peninsula, a visit to the local cultural museum, or a swim and rest on the beach. This evening you walk to a favorite local restaurant for a pesto cooking class, followed by dinner.

### **Grand Hotel dei Castelli, Sestri Levante**

In a privileged location on the Peninsula of Sestri Levante above the ancient town walls, this four-star castle hotel with extensive grounds and manicured gardens overlooks the entire coast. Light-filled and spacious, guestrooms have classic furnishings and polished wood floors. A grand entry, public lounges, and solarium terrace evoke 1920s glamour and style, while a private elevator descends to the town center, promenade, and marina. A private swimming area includes a seawater enclosure with beach lounges and bar, with an outlet onto the natural rocky shore. Among many dining options, the hotel's fine-dining restaurant offers indoor and alfresco seating with such regional specialties as pink gnocchi with seafood and pine nuts or catch of the day with Mediterranean flavors.

## **DAY 4**

Santa Margherita-Nozarego-Portofino loop; 3.9 miles, easy to moderate, 885-ft, elevation gain and loss. Santa Margherita and Portofino exploration

Today's walk highlights the eastern side of the Portofino Peninsula, facing the Tigullio Gulf. A short train ride takes you to the resort town of Santa Margherita Ligure with its ornate Baroque church and the English Romantic gardens of Villa Durazzo. From the bustling seaside promenade of Santa Margherita, you ascend gently along an old pilgrims' trail to Nozarego and to the hamlet of Gave with its restored chapel of San Girolamo. The path then follows the "valley of mills," with its many streams and small summer houses, where olives, chestnuts, and corn were ground. Reaching the Mulino del Gassetta, you can stop for a drink or a snack in this restored mill and view its original grinding stone and wine press. Next on the route is Olmi, the walk's highest point at 885 feet. From here, you begin a long descent into Portofino, passing by the chapel of Saint Sebastiano with more splendid views. Portofino, once a small fishing village and now a well-known luxury yacht harbor, captivates with its many pastel-colored houses, the church of Saint George on the cliff, Castello Brown, and the

lighthouse at the tip. From Portofino, you can choose to return to Santa Margherita by ferry or public bus or on foot to Paraggi, walking along the main promenade and then coming full circle back in the center of Santa Margherita, before catching the train back to Sestri Levante.

### Grand Hotel dei Castelli, Sestri Levante



### DAY 5

Levanto to Monterosso al Mare; 5.6 miles, moderate, 1,300-ft. elevation gain and loss, or Levanto-Bonassola loop; 4.8 miles, easy to moderate, 650-ft. elevation gain and loss. Levanto and Monterosso al Mare or Bonassola exploration

Today you begin your exploration of the Cinque Terre National Park, the designated UNESCO World Heritage site, and can choose from several options. You depart Sestri Levante by train (your luggage is transferred separately) for Levanto, a medieval town on the border of the national park. A short walk around the town is highly recommended to visit the remains of the 13th-century port, the church of Saint Andrew, and the historical center. From Levanto, you have two options that both showcase the Cinque Terre's fabulous scenery. For the moderate walk, you reach the ruins of Levanto's castle and start off on the path to Punta Mesco, which eventually levels off along an easy stretch with spectacular views. You then have another rigorous ascent over rough steps through oak forest, followed by a much easier stretch through a pine forest, culminating at the promontory of Punta Mesco. At 1,000 feet, your hard work is rewarded with an amazing bird's-eye view of all five villages of the Cinque Terre, the sea shimmering before you. A final steep 45-minute descent on large stone steps delivers you to Monterosso al Mare, which features the Cinque Terre's only sandy beach. The easy-to-moderate option follows the main sea promenade of Levanto to the main path to Scernio, leading to a panoramic cape thick with olive trees and wild broom. Rounding the entire Bonassola Gulf, you emerge near the castle and railway station. After enjoying the tiny town of Bonassola, and one of the best beaches of the area, you loop back to Levanto along an easy flat path, a former railway line. From Levanto or Monterosso, a short train ride brings you to charming Manarola, your home for two nights. Dinner is just around the corner at a family-run trattoria known for its fresh local seafood.

## **Da Baranin B&B, Manarola**

In the heart of Manarola—the second-smallest of the five Cinque Terre towns, and probably the oldest—this family-run bed and breakfast consists of a main building with a garden and stunning terrace overlooking the vineyards and sea. Nestled amongst the pastel-colored buildings and medieval church, accommodations are either spacious guestrooms or studio-style apartments with white tile floors and comfortable simple furnishings. You are welcomed like family in this exceptional setting; breakfast on the private terrace always includes homemade baked goods.

## **DAY 6**

Vernazza to Corniglia; 2.5 miles, moderate with challenging sections, 700-ft. elevation gain and loss. Vernazza and Corniglia exploration

Today's walk is dedicated to exploration of the Cinque Terre National Park, established in 1999 to protect the landscape, environment, and unique culture of this region. First, you take a short train ride to Vernazza, one of the most striking of the five towns, and walk to the old monastery and to the pier. Then, the trail from Vernazza to Corniglia begins with a steep ascent up a set of stone steps before leveling off along terraced vineyards clinging to seaside cliffs. You continue on the narrow trail for approximately two hours before reaching Corniglia, the most untouched of the Cinque Terre villages. Unlike the other villages of the Cinque Terre, Corniglia is not right on the sea, rather it sits on a promontory more than 300 feet above the sea, surrounded on three sides by vineyards and terraces, while the fourth side plunges to the water. From Corniglia, you may choose to walk down to the waterfront and take a train to Manarola or Riomaggiore, the southernmost town, with its houses pitched steeply on the rocks above its harbors, from where you can see the famous Via dell'Amore (often translated as "Lover's Lane"). The tradition of painting the houses of the Cinque Terre towns in various pastel hues was for the local men, usually sailors and fishermen, to recognize their homes from sea. Your hosts suggest a favorite restaurant at which to enjoy a final dinner, savoring the fresh and flavorful Ligurian cuisine.

## **Da Baranin B&B, Manarola**



## DAY 7

Departure from La Spezia

After breakfast, a 30-minute transfer takes you to La Spezia's central train station for onward travels.

### ITINERARY CHANGES

Please bear in mind that this is a typical itinerary, and the actual activities, sites, and accommodations may vary due to season, special events, weather, or transportation schedules. We reserve the right to alter the itinerary, since tour arrangements are made up to a year in advance and unforeseen circumstances may arise that mandate change. Itinerary changes are made to improve the tour and your experience.

### RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

Country Walkers is a leader in active travel with responsible tourism an integral part of our core values. Our tours reflect our dedication to best travel practices—and to the preservation of indigenous cultures and the environment. Country Walkers has made a donation on behalf of every traveler to the CW Travelers Fund, which supports designated projects in the communities and habitats in which we travel. We invite you to learn more about our efforts and initiatives for giving back.

Here's just one example that highlights our sustainable practices:

On a bluff just outside of Monterosso, the historic Convento dei Cappuccini chapel and monastery boasts a history dating back to the 17th century and art treasures by the likes of Van Dyck and Strozzi. A local cultural hub, it has played host to concerts, conferences, and theatrical performances for the surrounding community and has been beloved by locals for its seaside garden, orchards, and vineyards. However, in March 2013, severe landslides destroyed the convent's beautiful grounds. Though the cost of restoring the "paradise of the monks" was far beyond the modest means of the town or diocese, the project "Let's Rebuild Monterosso's Paradise" was soon created to begin raising money. Country Walkers is proud to contribute to this rebuilding project.

# Itinerary Overview

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**PLEASE NOTE:** your detailed route notes will be mailed to you approximately one month prior to your departure. While these route notes may list a number of accommodation options, **your specific accommodations are listed below.** Please make sure to bring this Itinerary Overview with you.

## STARTING POINT

**Hotel Bristol Palace, Genoa, Italy**

## NIGHTS 1 & 2

**Hotel Bristol Palace**

Via XX Settembre, 35

16121 Genoa, Italy

Tel 011 39 (0)10592541

Email [info.bristolpalace@duetorrihotels.com](mailto:info.bristolpalace@duetorrihotels.com)

[hotelbristolpalace.it](http://hotelbristolpalace.it)

Wireless Internet, hair dryers, and laundry service available.

## NIGHTS 3 & 4

**Grand Hotel dei Castelli**

Via Penisola di Levante, 26

16039 Sestri Levante, Italy

Tel 011 39 (0)185 487 020

Email [info@hoteldeicastelli.it](mailto:info@hoteldeicastelli.it)

[hoteldeicastelli.it](http://hoteldeicastelli.it)

Wireless Internet, hair dryers, and laundry service available.

## NIGHTS 5 & 6

**Da Baranin B&B**

Via Rollandi, 85

19017 Manarola, Italy

Tel 011 39 (0)187 920 595

Email [sara.barani@libero.it](mailto:sara.barani@libero.it)

[baranin.com](http://baranin.com)

Wireless Internet and hair dryers available. Laundry service unavailable.

## ENDING POINT

**La Spezia Centrale, Italy**

# Tour Facts at a Glance

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## TOUR LENGTH

7 days, 6 nights

## DEPARTURES

This tour is available daily, on request, from April 1 through June 30, and September 1 through October 31, 2016.

## TOUR PRICE

2016 departures	Per person	Single +	Solo Surcharge
April 1 – June 30 & September 1 – October 31	\$2,598	\$675	\$645

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## STARTING POINT

Hotel Bristol Palace, Genoa, Italy

## ENDING POINT

La Spezia Centrale, Italy

## ACTIVITY LEVEL

This tour is one of our Self-Guided Walking Adventures, rated moderate with challenging sections. This tour is more of a hiking than a walking experience. You should be in excellent physical condition with good balance and no orthopedic or cardiovascular conditions. While hikes only average 2 to 4 miles per day, there are significant daily ascents and descents up to 1,300 feet on steep paths and steps. The Cinque Terre region is characterized by extremely hilly and rocky terrain and very few stretches of flat walking. Ascents range from 30 to 45 minutes, beginning with 10 to 20 minutes of steep stair climbing on high stone steps. The hiking trails level out for periods of time and then descend steeply, also over stone steps. The terrain is mainly single-track trails, rocky with loose gravel. Paths are sometimes cobbled, hard-packed dirt, uneven stone steps, and pine needle-covered dirt through wooded areas, and occasionally paved. The itinerary includes three different Natural Protected Areas: Portofino, Punta Manara, and Cinque Terre. Most of the hikes are in oak and pine forests, through rugged hills dotted with Mediterranean herbs and shrubs, terraced

farmland, and hillside vineyards. Some of the hikes have little coverage from the sun, which, depending upon the temperature, can increase the challenge of this tour. Despite the paths being along the coast, they are well protected by vegetation and vertigo is not an issue, except in the Cinque Terre National Park, where a second option is available. A walking stick is highly recommended, even if you do not usually use one. There are no easier walking options available except for very short strolls in towns or on flat promenades by the sea.

However, the availability of local trains and boats provides plenty of flexibility and opportunities to skip the walks and explore the authentic fishing villages or bustling towns of the Italian Riviera, visit historical sites, or, depending on the time of year, to swim in the Ligurian Sea.

### **INCLUSIONS**

- » Breakfast daily and three dinners (Days 1, 3, and 5); local wine included with dinner
- » All accommodations while on tour
- » Local transfers as noted in the itinerary. Please note that the ferry from Punta Chiappa to Camogli (5 euros per person) on Day 2 and public bus (1.80 euros per person) or ferry (6 euros per person) from Portofino to Santa Margherita Ligure on Day 4 are not included.
- » Orientation meeting with a Country Walkers representative
- » Luggage transfers between the hotels
- » Detailed route notes (mailed to you approximately one month prior to your departure) and maps (provided to you at your orientation meeting)
- » 24-hour tour-related support provided by Country Walkers' local partner, Francesca Assandri
- » 24-hour One Call International Emergency Hotline and Travel Assistance
- » The unbeatable and cumulative experience of the Country Walkers staff

## **LET THE JOURNEY BEGIN**

Prior to your adventure you will receive:

- » Guest Information and Acknowledgment of Risk Forms to complete and return at least 45 days prior to your tour
- » Luggage tags
- » Route notes and maps
- » Your trip invoice

## **GRATUITIES**

Standard gratuities for all hotels, meals, and services that are included in your tour price will be paid by Country Walkers; however, additional tips are always welcome. Should you wish to tip for meals or services not included in the cost of the tour, please do so at your discretion. Local currency is preferred.

# Traveling To and From Your Tour

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## STARTING POINT

### Hotel Bristol Palace, Genoa, Italy

You may check into the hotel at any time on the first day of the tour. (If you arrive prior to the hotel's check-in time of 2:00 p.m., and your room is not yet ready, you may store your luggage at reception and set out to explore the city.)

A tour representative will meet you in the hotel lobby at 6:00 p.m. to provide an orientation meeting, ensure you are comfortably settled, and answer any questions you may have.

## MOST CONVENIENT AIRPORTS

Genoa's (Genova) Cristoforo Colombo Airport (GOA) is the closest airport to the starting point of the tour but requires connections from the U.S.

[aeroportodigenova.com](http://aeroportodigenova.com)

Pisa's Galileo Galilei Airport (PSA) is the closest airport to the end of the tour.

[pisa-airport.com](http://pisa-airport.com)

Milan's (Milano) Malpensa Airport (MXP) is the closest major international airport, with nonstop service from many U.S. cities.

[milan-mxp.com](http://milan-mxp.com)

Please refer to the Italian Government Tourist Office website, [enit.it](http://enit.it), for additional information about Italian airports and transportation to and from the airport. You may also wish to visit the Italian Tourism Official Website at [italia.it](http://italia.it).

## GETTING TO THE STARTING POINT

### From Genoa's airport (closest airport to the meeting point):

Taxis are readily available at the Genoa Airport. You may take a taxi to your hotel in downtown Genoa. The taxi ride takes about 15-20 minutes and costs approximately 30 euros.

### **From Pisa's airport:**

Pisa has two train stations; Pisa Centrale and Pisa Aeroporto. The two stations are connected by a direct service that takes 5 minutes. Pisa Centrale is the city's main train station and is located on the edge of the city; just a 5- to 10-minute taxi ride from points in the historical center. Pisa Aeroporto is the train station located directly at the Pisa Airport, which is a 10- to 15-minute taxi ride from the historical center (less than one mile). Pisa Aeroporto also offers service to Florence's Santa Maria Novella train station, including a few stops in between. If you arrive at the Pisa Airport, you will need to take a train from Pisa Aeroporto to Pisa Centrale before continuing on to Genoa.

### **From Milan's Malpensa airport:**

To reach Milan's Central train station for onward connections to Genoa, you may take the hour-long Malpensa shuttle, which departs every 20 minutes at a cost of approximately 4.50 euros. Alternately, metered taxis are available outside both Arrivals and Departures areas; the journey to Milan's Central train station takes about an hour and costs approximately 95 euros. A third option is the Malpensa express train, which departs every 20-30 minutes from Terminal 1 for Milan's Cadorna train station or Milan's Central train station. The journey takes 40-60 minutes and costs approximately 11 euros. Please refer to the travel times below when choosing your gateway city.

## **RAIL INFORMATION**

Approximate travel times for train travel to Genoa from various Italian cities are as follows: from Milan: 1½ hours; from Pisa: 2½ hours; from Florence: 3½-4 hours; from Rome: 4-5½ hours; from Venice: 4½-5 hours. Please note: these travel times are dependent upon train type and speed. Additionally, some of these journeys require station changes. For further rail information, including reservations, schedules, and up-to-date fares, please contact either Rail Europe at 800.622.8600 or [raileurope.com](http://raileurope.com), or Trenitalia at [trenitalia.com](http://trenitalia.com) (Trenitalia operates most train services in Italy).

## **PRE-TOUR ACCOMMODATIONS**

We suggest arriving in Italy at least one day prior to the tour start date. This will give you time to rest after your travels and recover from any effects of jet lag. For hotel and restaurant suggestions in various Italian cities, please visit [italia.it](http://italia.it).

## ENDING POINT

### La Spezia Centrale, Italy

#### Based upon individual departure times

There are no walks scheduled for the last day of the tour. A complimentary 30-minute private transfer will be provided from your last hotel to La Spezia's central train station, La Spezia Centrale, for onward travels (based on individual departure times and prior to the hotel's check-out time of 10:30 a.m.)

**Please provide us with your arrival and departure details to arrange this service by returning your Guest Information Form at least 45 days prior to the departure.**

Depending upon your destination, it may not be possible to depart for the U.S. on the last day of the tour. Please check airline schedules carefully. If you plan to schedule return flights immediately following the tour's conclusion, please call your airline directly for specific check-in requirements.

## MOST CONVENIENT AIRPORTS

Genoa's (Genova) Cristoforo Colombo Airport (GOA) is the closest airport to the starting point of the tour but requires connections from the U.S.

[aeroportodigenova.com](http://aeroportodigenova.com)

Pisa's Galileo Galilei Airport (PSA) is the closest airport to the end of the tour.

[pisa-airport.com](http://pisa-airport.com)

Milan's (Milano) Malpensa Airport (MXP) is the closest major international airport, with nonstop service from many U.S. cities.

[milan-mxp.com](http://milan-mxp.com)

## LEAVING THE TOUR

The most convenient way to leave the tour is by train from La Spezia Centrale. Approximate train times from La Spezia Centrale to various Italian cities are as follows: to Genoa: 1-2 hours; to Milan: 3½-4 hours; to Pisa: 1-1½ hours; to Florence: 2-2½ hours; to Rome: 3-4½ hours; to Venice: 5-6 hours.

Please note: these travel times are dependent upon train type and speed. Additionally, some of these journeys require station changes. For further rail information, including reservations, schedules, and up-to-date fares, please



contact either Rail Europe at 800.622.8600 or [raileurope.com](http://raileurope.com), or Trenitalia at [trenitalia.com](http://trenitalia.com) (Trenitalia operates most train services in Italy).

# Information & Policies

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## **GUARANTEED DEPARTURES**

Country Walkers guarantees the departure of every tour\*—no exceptions and no disappointments! From the moment you make your deposit, you can start preparing for your adventure. We take care of all the details to ensure a seamless, self-guided experience. For best availability, reserve your trip today!

*\*except in cases of force majeure*

## **RESERVATIONS**

Reservations for this tour may be made by calling Country Walkers at 800.464.9255. A \$350 per person deposit is required at the time of the reservation request. Final tour cost is due 90 days prior to tour departure date. As arrangements are confirmed at least a year in advance, the tour price is subject to change.

## **GUEST RESPONSIBILITIES**

Each guest has the responsibility to select a trip appropriate to his/her abilities and interests and to prepare for the trip by carefully reading the confirmation materials. To join this trip, you must be in good health and capable of completing activities as described in the day-to-day itinerary. Our in-house experts welcome the opportunity to discuss the tour in more detail. In order to meet your needs, we ask that you please share any relevant physical limitations or health conditions when you make your reservation.

## **CANCELLATION POLICY**

Cancellations received 91 days or more prior to the tour start date will incur a loss of \$150; cancellations received between 90 and 61 days prior to the tour start date incur a loss of 25 percent of the tour price; there are no refunds within 60 days of the tour start date. Up to 91 days prior to departure, you may transfer your reservation, depending on availability, from one departure to another in the same calendar year at no cost.\* Please notify us in writing.

*\*One transfer per year; afterwards a modest per-person transfer fee will apply. Please note that tours with seasonal prices may involve a higher price.*

## **TRAVEL INSURANCE**

We offer guests the opportunity to purchase a Travel Protection Plan. Please contact us for details.

## **TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS**

Air or other travel arrangements to and from your tour are not included in the price of your trip. We encourage you to contact your local travel agent, or Better Travel, a Vermont-based agency (800.331.6996 or [bettertravel@madriver.com](mailto:bettertravel@madriver.com)), for any additional air, hotel, rail, or transfer arrangements you may need.

# Italy at a Glance

## ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

**U.S. citizens:** Passports are required and must be valid for at least three months beyond the dates of travel. Visas are not required for stays of up to 90 days. For more information, see [travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov).



### Travel Tip

Have a variety of options to start your trip: ATM card(s), credit card(s), some dollars to exchange, and some euros in small denominations.

## CURRENCY

Italy uses the euro (EUR). For current exchange rates, visit [oanda.com](http://oanda.com).

Many businesses in Europe will no longer accept credit cards without PIN numbers (chip and pin cards). Always contact your bank or your credit-card company for details on fees and card use when traveling.

## TIME ZONE

Italy is in the Central European Time Zone, Eastern Standard Time plus 6 hours. For more information on worldwide time zones, see: [worldtimezone.com](http://worldtimezone.com).

## PHONE & INTERNET

Italy country code: +39

Cell phone coverage throughout Italy is extensive, but cannot be guaranteed to be accessible on all American mobile carriers or to function at all times while on the trail or in remote areas. For more information regarding international phone use, please refer to [countrywalkers.com/phones](http://countrywalkers.com/phones).



Internet access is generally very good in towns and villages; however, it is not guaranteed at all of the hotels used on the tour. For more details regarding Wi-Fi availability, please refer to the Itinerary Overview.

## LANGUAGE

Italian is Italy's official language.

While knowledge of the local language is not necessary, you may want to learn some fun and useful phrases; see [bbc.co.uk/languages/italian](http://bbc.co.uk/languages/italian) or the enclosed Reading Guide for a suggested phrase book.

## ELECTRICITY

Alternating current of 220V and 50Hz is used in Italy. Plugs have two round prongs. For a full listing of electrical outlets worldwide, see [electricaloutlet.org](http://electricaloutlet.org)

## WEATHER

Italy has a range of climates, depending on the region. In general, spring and fall are ideal for an active vacation, with daytime temperatures in the 60s to low 70s, evenings in the 50s, and occasional short rain showers.

In the northern Alpine areas, summer through early fall is an optimal time to travel. Springtime brings wildflowers, long days, and, on the table, early tender vegetables such as asparagus and artichokes. By late summer and fall, the warm days continue with highs in the low 80s, landscapes take on a golden hue as the grape harvest gets underway, and autumn specialties appear, such as mushrooms and truffles.

For up-to-date forecasts, see [qwikcast.com](http://qwikcast.com). For historical average temperatures and rainfall, see [weatherbase.com](http://weatherbase.com).

## ITALIAN CUISINE & WINE



Considered one of the world's finest cuisines, Italian food is undoubtedly one of the best things about traveling in Italy. Based on fresh local ingredients, Italian cooking is consequently very regional.

Northern Italy is the home of risotto, polenta, and slow-cooked meat dishes such as *osso bucco*. The cuisine of Tuscany and Umbria in central Italy also features meat and game dishes, such as *bistecca alla fiorentina* (Florentine steak), sausages, and roast pork, as well as vegetable- and bread-based dishes such as savory bruschetta, *ribollita* (vegetable soup), and *panzanella* (bread salad).

### Travel Tip

- Bringing your own hair dryer or other electrical device? You'll need a travel converter, available at most hardware, travel, or consumer electronic stores.
- For laptops or an electronic device with a dual voltage switch, you'll need the adapter plug but not a converter.

## Travel Tip

Coffee is served throughout the day in its many different ways. Italians tend to drink *caffè latte* or cappuccino until about 11:00 a.m. (a *latte* is a cup of hot milk). After 11:00 a.m., they usually drink *un caffè* (espresso). If you'd like it with a little milk you should order a *macchiato*. You'll need to specify if you want it *con latte caldo* (with hot milk), or *con latte freddo* (with cold milk), or *con schiuma* (with foam). Lastly, there's no charge to stand at the bar with a drink, but a small fee is added to the bill when you sit at a café table.

Southern Italy and Sicily are justly known for fresh seafood—spaghetti with tiny clams, or a main course of swordfish braised in a light tomato sauce—and fresh vegetables are also prominent— spaghetti with zucchini, or the well-known *insalata caprese* of tomatoes, basil, and fresh mozzarella cheese.

Meals in Italy typically have several courses, starting with an *antipasto* (an appetizer); then a *primo* (first course), which is usually pasta or risotto; a *secondo* (main course), which is a meat or fish dish; and *dolce* (dessert).

Wine has been produced in Italy for millennia, and the country's climate and geography of coastline, foothills, and mountains allow grape growing in 20 regions from the Alps in the north to southernmost Sicily. Restaurants feature their regions' local wine.

Please see the detailed itinerary for region-specific sample menus, local delicacies, and wines.

## LIFE IN ITALY

### Shopping hours

Shops and stores are generally open Monday to Saturday between 9:30 a.m.

and 12:30 p.m., and from 3:30 to 7:30 p.m.; department stores and supermarkets are open all day from 9:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Open-air markets generally open from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., although in larger cities such as Florence, open-air markets are typically open all day, even on Sundays.

### Meal times

Breakfast is served at hotels from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 or 10:30 a.m. Lunch is served in restaurants from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. and dinner is usually served from 7:30 to 11:00 p.m. (Restaurant meal times may vary by region, trending from earlier to later as you travel from north to south.)



## Tipping

Tipping in restaurants is not compulsory in Italy. In restaurants the menu or bill indicates *servizio incluso*, meaning “service is included.” However, locals tend to leave a small amount in coins after a meal or a coffee—roughly one to two percent of the total, or one to two euros for a meal of up to 50 euros. For a coffee or a drink in a bar or café, 20 to 50 euro cents is appropriate.

Taxi drivers aren’t generally tipped, but you could round up the total, letting the driver keep the change. For luggage assistance, a small tip of one to three euros is appropriate.

## TRAVEL RESOURCES

National Italian tourist board official sites

[italia.it](http://italia.it) and [enit.it](http://enit.it)

### Italian public holidays

To assist in travel planning, it may be helpful to be aware of Italian public holidays, festivals, or calendars of events. Visit the Italian tourist board’s website noted above, then click on Useful Information, More Information, and National Public Holidays. For local events, visit the regional tourism websites (links can be found on the region’s page on [italia.it](http://italia.it), in the Discover Italy section).

## TRAVEL IN ITALY

### Trains

**Trenitalia:** [trenitalia.it](http://trenitalia.it) (Italy’s national train company)

**Raileurope:** [raileurope.com](http://raileurope.com) or 800.622.8600, a U.S.-based company that provides schedules, reservations, and ticketing for all European train networks (their multi-day/-week/-month passes in one country or combinations of countries may be an economical and convenient choice for European train travel.)

### Travel Tip

Most restaurants have a “cover charge” or *il coperto*, a per-person fee of one to three euros that is added to your final bill. It is a legitimate practice and it is considered the “fee” for the place setting, the bread, tap water (which is fine to drink), and breadsticks.

### Travel Tip

Be aware that you may need to validate your train ticket by “punching” it before boarding, using a small machine located on the train platform, which stamps the time and date on it.

### Other local transportation



In addition to its excellent rail network, Italy also has several regional airlines, many regional bus lines, and, in coastal and lake regions, local ferries. Taxis are available at all major airports, train stations, and in smaller towns, and can be reserved in advance (your hotel can usually provide assistance).

Most major car rental agencies are available at Italian airports and train stations. For more information contact Country Walkers, or go to [italia.it](http://italia.it), and click on “Useful Information.” For driving, you can further navigate to “Rules to drive in Italy.”

### Museum information and online reservations

[tickitaly.com](http://tickitaly.com)



# Packing List

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## PACKING TIPS

Pack light! Keep in mind that most hotels are small and family-run and may not provide luggage assistance from the reception area to the room, so there will be times you have to carry your own luggage short distances. Due to space constraints, we require you to limit your luggage to one medium piece (approximately 18x15x29 inches or 8,000 cu. in.) and one small carry-on, per person. Please note that due to health and safety reasons, our local representatives are not permitted to carry (individual) bags that exceed 30 pounds (15 kg). We recommend packing any personal necessities, medications, your hotel itinerary/emergency contact information, your hiking boots (or shoes), and extra clothes in your carry-on luggage in the event that your baggage is delayed. We suggest leaving valuable jewelry at home. Make a copy of your passport (and any other important documents) and keep it in a separate area of your luggage. Always be alert when carrying a purse, camera, money belt, or backpack in busy cities, airports, and train stations.

## FOOTWEAR

- » Hiking boots or shoes. There are many brands to choose from. Proper fit is crucial, so try on new boots or shoes while wearing socks you plan to use on tour. Be sure to break in new footwear well before your tour begins. By the time you're ready to join your walking tour, you should be able to complete 2 to 4 miles of walking without discomfort. We require lightweight boots or shoes with proper ankle support and good tread to ensure stability on all types of terrain. Waterproof footwear keeps feet dry in heavy rain and water-resistant footwear keeps feet dry in heavy dew. Country Walkers reserves the right to deny participation to any guest not wearing appropriate footwear.
- » Comfortable shoes for evening strolls
- » Synthetic, moisture-wicking socks (cotton socks are not recommended for walking as they will quickly cause blisters)
- » Blister remedy

## CLOTHING

- » Lightweight, wash-and-wear long pants

- » Long-sleeved, wash-and-wear shirt
- » T-shirts and shorts
- » Polar fleece or light wool pullover (it will keep you warm even when wet)
- » Dinner attire: dress is smart casual
- » Light jacket or sweater for evening strolls
- » Church attire: exposed shoulders and knees are not permitted when visiting most churches in Italy. Men may wear long Bermuda-style shorts (to the knee) and women may wear longer skirts (to the knee). Convertible zip-off pants are a good option for both men and women on days that combine hiking and church visits. Women may carry a light scarf, shawl, or jacket to cover bare shoulders and upper arms when needed.

## **OUTERWEAR**

- » Waterproof rain gear: jacket, pants, hat, or hood
- » Windbreaker with hood (your rain gear may be suitable)
- » Hat with a broad brim or visor

## **EQUIPMENT**

- » Pack (minimum size of 25L): large enough to carry water, extra clothing, rain gear, lunch, and personal items (camera, etc.)
- » Waterproof cover for pack
- » Water bottle, canteen, or CamelBak-type water reservoir or hydration pack to carry your own water while walking (equivalent of one liter)
- » Sunblock and lip balm
- » Insect repellent
- » Sunglasses
- » Toilet kit for when facilities are not available on the walks. Include zip-lock baggies, tissues, and moist towelettes, which can be disposed of upon return to the hotel
- » Personal first-aid kit including any medications you ordinarily take (in their original container)

## OPTIONAL

- » Telescopic walking sticks (Please note that while telescopic walking sticks are recommended for this tour, they are not provided by Country Walkers. Therefore, please plan on bringing your own should you wish to use them.)
- » Binoculars
- » Bathing suit for optional use of hotel pools or spas and swimming in the sea
- » Flip-flops or water sandals
- » Camera and charger and/or extra batteries
- » Zip-lock bags (to keep camera and valuables dry)
- » Small notebook and pen
- » Field guides (see enclosed reading list)
- » Folding umbrella
- » Bandanna
- » Washcloth (many European hotels do not provide them)
- » Hand sanitizer and/or moist towelettes
- » Motion-sickness bracelets or other non-sleep-inducing remedy if prone to motion sickness on bus, car, or boat rides
- » Alarm clock
- » International cell phone