



CINQUE TERRE, the Romantic Riviera

The **Cinque Terre** is a rugged portion of coast on the Riviera of Liguria, west of the city of La Spezia. It lies for circa 15km and comprises five villages: **Monterosso, Vernazza, Corniglia, Manarola and Riomaggiore**. The coastline, the five villages and the surrounding hillsides are all part of Unesco Heritage site. Over the centuries, people have carefully built terraces on the rugged, steep landscape right up to the cliffs that overlook the sea. The human agricultural activities – especially the viticulture – has contributed to create a suggestive and unique landscape as well as the development of the typical “muri a secco” or drywalls. The suggestive crystal blue of the surrounding sea, the several buildings of architectural value, together with a series of paths in the nature has helped the Cinque Terre in being always an unexpected experience. **The most famous track is the Via dell’Amore. All the 5 villages are reachable by walk seafront path.**



MONTEROSSO AL MARE is the biggest village of the *Cinque Terre* and the first most historically documented (1056). Formed by two villages, Monterosso is intriguing and historically important. Notably the Church of Saint John Baptist, in front of which stood the medieval Palace of the *Podestà* (the sovereign). Of great importance the *Colle dei Cappuccini*, the *Castello dei Fieschi* and the monastery San Francesco that contains works from Van Dick, Cambiaso, Piola and Guido Reni. *Villa Montale* is where the Nobel Prize poet Eugenio Montale lived.

VERNAZZA is considered the most suggestive village of the Cinque Terre. Vernazza was documented for the first time in 1080. The high life standard reached by the village in the Middle Age is still today witnessed by the town planning and the presence of architectonic elements of great prestige like lodges, churches, tower houses and porches. The village is dominated by the ruins of the “castrum” a series of medieval buildings dating back to the XI century with a castle and a cylindrical tower. It is composed of separated buildings with an only road and by steep stairs “arpaie”. The most important historical monument is the *Santa Margherita di Antiochia*, a church with the Romanesque’s Genovese style of the XIII century.

CORNIGLIA is the only village of the Cinque Terre that is not on the seashore, as it is on a rocky cape. Its houses are low and large and resemble more to the houses in the hinterland rather than typical coast houses. It witnesses the traditional vocation of the village, since ages more involved towards the land rather than the sea traditions. The *Chiesa di San Pietro*, in the Gothic Genovese style, was built in 1350 on the ruins of another building. The façade with a marble rose window is enriched with many decorations among which one represents a stag: the symbol of the village. The *Oratorio dei Disciplinati* of the XVIII century offers a unique panorama on the sea and in *Il Largo Taragio*, the little main square, is the heart of the village.

MANAROLA is a little jewel rich of typical tower houses in the characteristic Genovese style. Founded during the XII century, the village name derived possibly from the ancient “magna roea”, a big mill wheel that was present in the village. The first news of the village appears around 1200 and relate to the Fieschi story. In the XVI century the village was conquered by pirates. The most important monument is the *Chiesa di San Lorenzo*. The church was built in 1338 by the citizens of Manarola and Volastra. The plan of the church shows a three naval church with a rose window with 12 columns. The steeple was erected also for defensive purposes.

RIOMAGGIORE In 1251 the citizens of Riomaggiore swore loyalty to the Genovese Republic. Between 1200 and 1300 the inhabitants of this village decided to move towards the sea in order to bring life to the village. This emigration was approved by the Genovese government, that allowed the access to the sea trade. San Giovanni Battista is the church erected in 1340; alongside the *Oratorio di Santa Maria Assunta* are the main monuments of Riomaggiore. The *Castello* dominates the vision of the village historical centre.

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DVT - davincitravels – www.davincitravels.com
massimo@davincitravels.com - beatrice@davincitravels.com
Florence - Italy - Phone +39 0571 913093