

## SHERPA: WALKING OR SIGHTSEEING - ITALY'S COASTAL NATIONAL PARK

6-day / 5-night self-guided centre-based walking holiday

The walk takes you to the Ligurian coastline to enjoy some more sublime pleasures for walkers who enjoy being based at a single centre. The Tyrrhenian coast of Liguria has been celebrated for centuries and this holiday will take you through the 'five lands' using a mixture of coastal and inland footpaths. You will be staying in a traditional style 'auberge' in the small resort of Monterosso close to the sea, where regional dishes are very much the specialty.

The idea is that on most days you either walk from the hotel or take the train from Monterosso - the station is a 10-minute walk from the hotel - to start the next walk (sometimes from where you left off on the previous evening). After walking to the next place on the itinerary you can get the train back again to Monterosso. There are frequent train departures in both directions, and on most days there are opportunities for bathing.

If you don't feel like walking, or if you want to reduce the length of the existing walk, you can always spend time on the beaches or more time discovering the beautiful villages of the Cinque Terre more intimately.

Each of the Cinque Terre towns and villages has its own unique character and flavour:

**Monterosso** itself is a small beach resort with an older town behind. The evening light on the sea is quite sublime and there are a whole host of restaurants and ice cream shops. **Vernazza** is an old port with a turreted fort protecting an inner marina. There are many bars and old buildings that spread out behind the village to where the vineyards rise in steep terraces that are intensively mechanised with little rack railways and overhead cables to carry the grapes. The terraces merge imperceptibly with the forests higher up. **Corniglia** is built high above the sea on the cliffs of twisted strata jutting out into the water and is famous for its narrow streets and its churches. You will find some good trattorie here.

**Manarola** sits at the end of the Via dell'Amore: "The Path of Love" as the tourist brochures put it; there is also the church of Nativita della Vergine with its well-known rosette window. Finally there is **Riomaggiore**, perhaps the most interesting town of the five, with its medieval tower blocks crammed together overlooking an inlet of intense aquamarine colour, occupied by little fishing and day trip boats. The buildings are all painted in bright pastel shades, complementing the natural Mediterranean light.

The sea floor off the Cinque Terre is now a marine National Park.

**Departs:** Daily from February to November (pre May and after September you should be fully prepared for some cold weather although normally it is fairly mild all year round).

**Cost:** \$1030 per person twin share (including breakfast) for March, April & October to December  
\$1165 per person twin share (including breakfast) for May to September  
\$450 single room supplement – all year round

**From:** Monterosso, which is reached by train from Pisa (with an international airport) or by train from La Spezia or Genoa or Rome.



**Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details or reservations**

**Level of Difficulty - Fitness:** We grade this tour as 'Easy – Moderate', because there are easy options and also some reasonably strenuous day walks. A high standard of fitness is not necessary but in order to make the most of the walking opportunities in this area clients should be able to walk for up to 7 hours a day in hot sun on tracks and paths that can be quite steep and undulating. Some routes have steep steps or loose gravel in places. Being sensibly dressed for the sun and the heat and drinking enough water are both very important!

**Waymarking:** Part of the route is waymarked with red and white signs; elsewhere there may be numbers, sometimes within blue rings. It is however normally necessary to follow the route descriptions provided together with the maps.

**Day Stages:** 10-20 km with the opportunity of extending, or reducing the length of the basic walking day.



### Outline Itinerary:

□ **Day 1:** Travel to Monterosso - access via the main railway line between Pisa and Genoa. There are some direct trains from Pisa central station to Monterosso; on weekdays direct services from Pisa depart about every 2 hours, with journey time 1.5 hours. Faster (Espresso and Rapido) trains normally stop only in La Spezia; if you are coming from Pisa, you may have to change onto a local train in La Spezia; if you are coming from Genoa you should change in Sestri Levante. You should aim to arrive in Monterosso by early evening. The walk from the station to the hotel takes about 10 minutes along the coastal road, 15 mins with baggage. Check into the hotel which is only 100 metres from the beach, but still in the old part of town; you may have the time to take a quick swim. The historical centre of the village is characterised by *carrugi* (narrow lanes) with little shops selling local handicrafts. It is only a short walk to the Capuchin monastery where you can enjoy the silence as you look out over the sea.

**Note:** Days 2 to 5 can be taken in any order. Other walks not described below are also possible.

□ **Day 2:** Take a half-day walk to Levanto (7km) along the beautiful coastal path and up to a high ex signaling point from where you will get a great view across to the Cinque Terre. You could then drop down to Levanto, past the old castle, have a great gelati and a swim. Before taking the train back to Monterosso. A longer harder alternative is to train to Levanto and walk to Deiva Marina. (15km) A long day that might take you as much as seven hours to complete. However the route passes by some lovely viewpoints, giving the opportunity to pause on olive terraces overlooking the sea. If it is very hot, there is shade around with oak and pine forest clinging to the coastal hillsides. There is a steep descent down to Deiva Marina, where the train back to Monterosso takes about 15 minutes. There are usually a couple per hour.

□ **Day 3:** A Circular walk from Monterosso to Col di Gritta via Punta Mesco. A rolling 10km walk that takes you through the forests around the back of the town. Beautiful shady locations for picnics and of course great sea views.

□ **Day 4:** A walk along the Cinque Terre. 12 km. This walk is the classic walk along the Cinque Terre! Taking the train from Monterosso to Riomaggiore, the walk returns via the coastal path taking in vineyards, citrus groves and picturesque villages as it goes. Head along "The path of love" to Manarola and then continue to Corniglia, Vernazza, and back to Monterosso. The route gets harder as you go along, but if you are feeling the heat, or are tired, you could take a train back from any of the stations. There is a lot to see today, it could take you up to 8 hours, but you could split the walking over two days, so that you could make the most of town site seeing and picnics.

- **Day 5:** Walk from Riomaggiore to Portovenere (13km). This time, taking the train to Riomaggiore, the walk starts by ascending the magnificent coastline steeply through extensive woodlands passing Campiglia with views to islands out to sea. On the descent there are vistas of Portovenere and the church of San Pietro sitting on a rock in the Mediterranean. Return by bus to the train station at La Spezia, or take a (seasonal) ferry to Monterosso.
- **Day 6:** Depart from the Cinque Terre after breakfast.

### **Accommodation & Meals**

**Nights 1 to 5** are spent in a very pleasant and comfortable 3 star hotel about 100 metres from the beach in the old historical centre of Monterosso. The hotel is a small family-run establishment; the 25 rooms have TV and telephone. Double/twin rooms have en-suite facilities. The hotel has a quiet terrace garden with lemon trees and a sea view (the terrace will probably not open until May).

**Breakfasts:** in countries such as Italy usually consist of coffee and croissant; sometimes, bread rolls, yoghurts, ham and cheese as well. If you want more for breakfast then we would suggest you purchase some food the night before. It is important for you to tell us if you have any dietary requirements when you book your holiday so that we can inform everyone that you are staying with.

**Evening meals:** this tour is on a bed and breakfast basis. This gives you plenty of scope for finding a good restaurant during the day or having an evening meal in Monterosso or in any of the other towns along the route.

**Lunches:** Picnic lunches are not included in the tour price, but materials for picnics can be purchased in Monterosso. There are also shops and restaurants in all of the other villages that you pass through on the walks. Alternatively you may fancy a meal in one of the villages en route – after which (and a glass or two of local wine) you may decide that a dawdle through the village would be quite enough.

Please note that on summer evenings the towns and villages of the Cinque Terre become bustling, lively, family seaside resorts with numerous mainly Italian tourists. People eat late and take the air.

**We Provide:** Route Notes & highlighted trail maps.

**Not Included:** Local transfers including trains to and from the hotel and lunches are also not included (see Cinque Terre Card below), neither are personal expenses.

The Cinque Terre National Park has introduced a **Cinque Terre Card** and you need to get the one valid for 7 days. This costs approx 36 Euros and is not included in the tour cost. This is a combined pass covering park tolls and it promises:

- Unlimited (2nd class) travel on the trains between Levanto and La Spezia.
- Use of environmentally friendly green buses in each of the 5 towns.
- Access to all paths, observation and information centres.
- Train and ferry timetables (in season) and “maps” are given with the card.

**Other walking holidays** – guided in small groups or self-guided with inn-to-inn luggage transfers & meals – are available in many parts of Europe through Outdoor Travel. These include a host of walking options in nearby Tuscany and Umbria Lake Garda or the Dolomites, pilgrimage routes such as the **Via Francigena** from the Alps to Rome, and in France & Spain such as the **Camino de Santiago** or **Way of St James** from Le Puy to Santiago, the route of Pilgrims along the River Yonne to Veزالay in Burgundy, the **Camino Portuguese** from Porto to Santiago and **St Cuthbert’s Way** from Scotland into England.

We offer literary routes such as **Wainwrights Way** in England, ‘far from the maddening crowd’ on the Dorset – Wessex Trail or **Stevenson’s Trail** ‘travels with a donkey’ in the wild Auvergne in central France.

**Contact Outdoor Travel for more details, travel brochures and reservations:**

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