



**BIODIVERSITY**  
FOR ALL TASTES



# BIODIVERSITY

FOR ALL TASTES

A travelling menu through  
**Liguria's protected areas**

Region of Liguria  
Department of the Environment  
Section on Projects and programmes for the Protection and Development of the Environment

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as part of the “National Strategy for Biodiversity: implementation of sustainable tourism”



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# INTRODUCTION

Biodiversity and taste.

So, my job is to explain this pairing, this logical jump from a scientific term that in Europe is synonymous to protecting habitats and species, to that noun so dear to our pleasure.

I need to do it in two stages.

First of all, imagine that you are in a large room in Rome where all the representatives of the Regions and the Minister - who generally talk about biodiversity as if it were only a fact of legislation, procedures, and Latin names - vote in a document that provides support to Regions in relation to information and tourist activities, to be presented at Expo 2015.

Was it all just a big mistake? No, anything but. These are experts who want to send out a clear message shared at national and EU level; i.e., that the protection of biodiversity produces essential goods and services. Sure, they are services and goods (“eco-system services” in Euro lingo) that we often do not pay for with money: clean water, pure air, wood, fuel, natural recycling of waste, environments for recreation, and measures to mitigate erosion. But we pay dearly when we do not have them: just think of the costs involved in building and maintaining a water purifier...

So then, does biodiversity help tourism? Of course it does! If Liguria is one of the most visited Italian regions, it is because it still manages to maintain a land that is intact, beautiful, and healthy in the 2000 Nature Areas interspersed around the Region and, in particular, in the Parks. Also, because it can boast a “natural capital” of extremely high value that counts three bio-geographical regions (alpine, continental, and Mediterranean) in one small space, a unique case in Italy.

So if a picture is worth a thousand words, in Liguria, where the people are not that chatty, we like the idea that a flavour, or an aroma, is worth so much more. Aromas and flavours, more than sight, hearing, and touch, immediately reawaken feelings of pleasure and fulfilment that do not need to be rationalised. They communicate with our most emotional side linked to deep memories.

Therefore, the flavour of biodiversity is the way we have chosen to explain, without too many words, how our delicious food is so indissolubly linked to the protection and development of our rich, precious, and widespread regional biodiversity.

When you discover the plain cuisine typical of western Liguria (*page 15*) or the *ciuppin* fish soup (*page 27*), taste the honey from the Ligurian Parks (*page 33*) or the *pigato* grape (*page 17*) or try the San Stè cheese (*page 55*) or the anchovies (*page 65*), you cannot help but immediately think of the wonder of the alpine pastures, the beech woods in autumn, the shady chestnut groves, the garrigue in bloom, the aromas of the Mediterranean scrub, the mysterious bats, the thousands of species of birds, the corals, and the gorgeous underwater landscapes of our Marine Protected Areas... and of how much the work of the men and women who look after them all is worth.

The Assessor for Parks of the Liguria Region  
*Pippo Rossetti*

# LIGURIA'S **PROTECTED AREA**

The Regional system of Protected areas is integrated by Rete Natura 2000 (a network comprising areas that are particularly safeguarded for the habitats and birds and fauna) and the widespread network of paths comprising the REL (Ligurian Hiking Network).



0 10 20 30 40 km

# REGIONAL AND MARINE PROTECTED AREA **HANBURY BOTANICAL GARDENS**



## HOW TO GET THERE

### By car

A10 motorway Genova – Ventimiglia: exit at Ventimiglia. SS 1 Aurelia towards France Ponte San Luigi (approximately 7 km) Escota A8 motorway Aix en Provence – Menton: exit at Menton.

RN 7 towards Italy Ponte San Luigi. SS 1 Aurelia (3 km).

### By train

Genova-Ventimiglia line (Ventimiglia station) RT bus terminus (Riviera Trasporti - Tel. + 39 0184 592706) for Ponte San Luigi in Via Cavour, 150 metres from Ventimiglia railway station.

## LOCATION

Corso Montecarlo, 43  
La Mortola  
18039 Ventimiglia (IM)  
Tel. +39 0184 22661  
[www.giardinihanbury.com/en/contatti](http://www.giardinihanbury.com/en/contatti)



## SURFACE AREA

18 hectares

## MUNICIPALITY

Ventimiglia

In 1867, Sir Thomas Hanbury purchased a large holding at **Capo Mortola**, at the French border, and created a botanical garden there which became world famous. Along with the pre-existing **citrus** and **olive trees**, he introduced **new varieties of fruit** and ornamental trees from gardens all over the world and French, Genoese, and Sicilian nurseries.

In Liguria, citrus trees were cultivated since the 16th century in Nervi, Genoa, San Remo, and Menton.

Today the Hanbury collection includes 270 citrus plants, including **ancient ornamental or production varieties**, with 60 different types of sweet orange, bitter orange, lemon, cedro, lime, chinotto, grapefruit, and bergamot, many of which are important for eating or for **cosmetic, pharmaceutical, and ornamental purposes**.

The cultivations have a low environmental impact, with biological methods subject to rigorous monitoring.



## THE SHADDOCK

Many citrus trees produce fruit with lots of seeds and lack commercial qualities, but their conservation is important for maintaining biodiversity from a genetic, historical, and agronomic point of view, also for possible future usages.

The **shaddock** is extremely large; it produces fruit that is over 2kg in weight and 25cm in diameter, with a very thick aromatic peel. The fruit of the bitter orange tree are the basic ingredient of **marmalade**

which is typically eaten at breakfast or afternoon tea by the English.

In Riviera, the **bitter orange trees** are a sign of the cultural exchanges between the Mediterranean, the Orient, and English style which is reflected in the love for gardens and nature, also through the estate of the Hanbury Botanical Gardens, a regional protected area managed by Genoa University.

FLAGSHIP  
Product



## BEYOND THE GARDEN

The sea lying under Capo Mortola comprises a protected marine area which is extremely rich in biodiversity, with **meadows of posidonia**, underwater springs of fresh water, shallows, caves, and interesting populations of sea bass and lobsters. The utilisation of the area is regulated by conservation measures aimed above all at **protecting the fauna** and its **habitats**.

The Hanbury Botanical Gardens also support social activities and the spread of the **principles of respecting flora and nature** overall, in collaboration with the hinterland municipalities. They recently took part in the reconstruction of the **Herb Museum at Cosio d'Arroschia** and promoting lavender (essential oils and other products in the municipalities of **Molini di Triora** and **Carpasio**).

## Hanbury Jam

### Ingredients

1 kg of caffra apple or kei apple pulp  
2 slightly unripe apples or quinces  
750 g of sugar  
½ shaddock (or alternatively 2 untreated lemons), just the rind  
water, as needed



### Preparation

Peel and core the caffra apples and unripe apples or quinces.

Place the caffra apple pulp, the sugar, and the white part of the shaddock or lemon rind in a saucepan with very little water and bring to the boil.

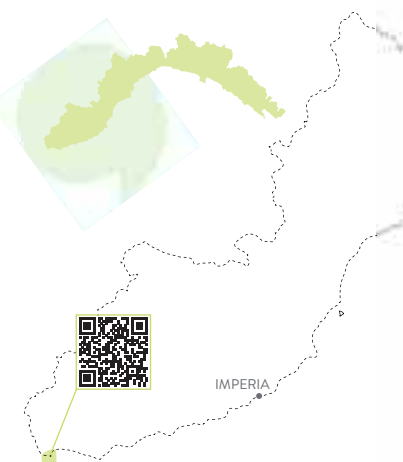
After 20 minutes add the apples or quinces cut into small pieces.

Continue cooking until you reach the desired density.

Fill sterilised jars with the mixture, leaving 0.5 cm of empty space.

Close the jars well and leave to cool.

During the cooking process, the yellow colour of the caffra apples turns red. The rind of the shaddock (similar to a pomelo) or the lemons is needed to make the jam bitter. Hanbury Jam has a slightly sour taste and is served with tea and English biscuits.







Hanbury Botanical Gardens, *Lomelosia cretica*



# REGIONAL NATURE PARK

## LIGURIAN ALPS



### HOW TO GET THERE

#### By car

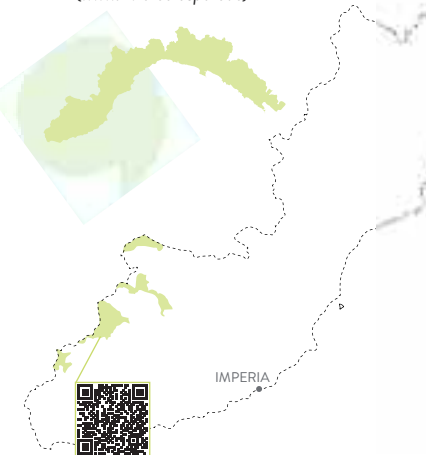
A10 motorway. Val Nervia: exit at Ventimiglia or Bordighera, take the SS1 Aurelia towards the SP 64 for Dolceacqua, Rocchetta Nervina, or Pigna. Valle Argentina: exit at Taggia, take the SS1 Aurelia towards the SP 548 for Badalucco, Molini di Triora, Triora. Valle Arroscia: exit at Imperia Est towards the SS28 for Pieve di Teco, Colle di Nava.

#### By train

Imperia Oneglia and Imperia Porto Maurizio stations for Valle Arroscia; Taggia station for Valle Argentina; Ventimiglia and Sanremo stations for Val Nervia.

#### By bus

Riviera Trasporti has daily bus services to the seven municipalities of the Park ([www.rivieratrasporti.it](http://www.rivieratrasporti.it))



### LOCATION

Piazza Umberto I  
18037 Pigna (IM)  
Tel. +39 0184 1928312  
[parcoalpiliguri@libero.it](mailto:parcoalpiliguri@libero.it)  
[www.parks.it/parco.alpi.liguri/Eindex.php](http://www.parks.it/parco.alpi.liguri/Eindex.php)



### SURFACE AREA

6041 hectares

### MUNICIPALITIES

Cosio d'Arroscia, Mendatica,  
Montegrosso Pian Latte, Pigna,  
Rezzo, Rocchetta Nervina, Triora

The Park reflects in the sea starting from its mountaintops, over 2000 metres high. Due to this continuity, the Park has applied as a candidate as a UNESCO World Heritage Site together with the adjacent **Parks of Mercantour** (France) and the **Maritime Alps** (Piedmont). Nature's intense work over millions of years built this land, which is now a unique geological environment, and biodiversity comprises of refined and ancient endemisms. Together with the rich quality of the particular micro-climate and its soils, which testify a past of deep geological upheaval, the Park of the Ligurian Alps has a completely different atmosphere to the modern world, gleaning its strength from far-off eras. The traces of **ancient druid rites** are conserved and were used

for centuries as references by modern religions, while a civilisation of stone and pasturage also materialised on the land and the settlements, which are still today immersed in an authentic, habitable Medieval air. There are also works of art whose roots are based in common religion, legends that transmit the dreams, hard work, and fear of entire generations, in the memory of the *jus primae noctis* and the *witch* hunts. Triora hosted the last big European event in this terrible chapter of history as we can see in the specific museum on the subject. In an environment where man can truly recognise himself, intellectuals from all over Europe found the right climate here to develop great ideas. In 1957, the Situationist International was set up in **Cosio d'Arroscia**, right in the middle of the Park, combining various experiences of the 20th century avant-garde movement.



### RECOMMENDED ITINERARY

#### Plain cuisine

The subject of food is everyday culture in the

lands of the Park. In these places where the sea is nearby as it shaped them and left its mark in the mountains, reference must

be made to what a beautiful, and therefore rugged and tough, land can offer. The matters of the table are united with the need for survival and the **talent of generations of women** which transform the land into flavour and health. There are not many different ingredients and they are all simple: **alpine herbs, chestnuts, wheat flour, dairy products, white cabbage, leek, garlic, turnips, potatoes, cheese.** However, like magic, the skilled countrywomen's hands bring out the flavour, which is love for the land, celebration, virtuosity, satisfaction, and quality of life. The cuisine is *bianca* (plain) here, as the tomatoes and basil of the coast are far away. Salt gets here with difficulty, but there are alpine huts, distance from home for the long periods of migratory herding and, therefore, the need to







nourish oneself using only what can be gathered in the pastures or forests and the milk of the brigasca sheep. You can find several variations of the same dishes in each of the municipalities along the road of the alpine huts: an itinerary of flavours that are always different, while uniting to create one distinct tribute to the land. So, herbs dominate in **Cosio**

**d'Arroschia**; in **Mendatica**, a recipe called *Streppa e caccia là* (literally, tear off and throw into the water as it is); in **Montegrosso Pian Latte**, another recipe, *Le Raviore*, ravioli containing up to twenty types of different herbs; in **Rezzo** you can taste *ü bunettu de laite* (milk pudding), a simple, velvety dessert, and finally **Triora** whose bread does not need any fillings. Along this

itinerary, known as the *Strada della Cucina Bianca* (route of plain cuisine), you can reach *La Brigue* in nearby France or *Briga Alta* in Piedmont where this culture continues. This **Cucina Bianca** has a recognised king, the famous *Brusso*, a ricotta-based cheese that is fermented in spirits, with a strong, unique flavour, used in dressings and dishes, or simply spread on *Triora* bread.

### Ü GRAN PISTAU

There is a place in the Park of the Ligurian Alps where, for many years now, a really **ancient tradition** has been revived: sowing wheat by tearing up the steep land from the mountain by the typical method used in the

Ligurian Riviera called *fasce* (terracing supported by dry-stone walls). The **wheat** grown using this ancient method which involves huge effort is then harvested and placed in a special mortar and crushed roughly. All that the land offers is added

to this wheat, i.e. pork rind, leek, garlic, extra-virgin olive oil made from Taggiasca olives, bay leaves, salt, and a pinch of cheese. This dish, which has now been revived and is celebrated in a festival, is another symbol of the food rooted in the land.

### THE WHITE BEAN OF PIGNA

If the Park of the Ligurian Alps merits to be appointed a UNESCO World Heritage Site it is largely thanks to the composition of its soil. It is in this incoherent land located in the high mountains, with chalky spring waters rich in minerals, where the **white bean of Pigna**, protected by the Slow Food movement, grows. Before you taste it, you may be tempted to say that it is only a bean, a small ovoid bean, but when it comes into contact with your taste buds, only then will you feel its soft butter-like texture, almost as if there was no skin, and a flavour similar to chestnuts and fresh walnuts.

The **mountains of Pigna**, **Castelvittorio**, and **Buggio** are the exclusive locations of this legume: a treasure for a wonderful, suffering land. Along with the white bean of Pigna, we must also

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note the other great wealth of this area: the Taggiasca olive dominates the lower slopes of the

Park's mountains. This exceptional cultivar has rightly been made famous by many important chefs, and a drizzle of extra-virgin olive oil is perhaps the best companion of the white bean of Pigna to make its flavour triumph and restore the deepest sense of these lands. That is to say, we must return to the white bean of Pigna (and also the *Cucina Bianca* or the goats and beans of Rocchetta Nervina) if we really want to find out what we are made of and, in the Park of the Ligurian Alps, if you believe that our well-being is to be far from the hustle and bustle, you will finally find the time to ask yourself the right questions and, perhaps, find the best replies to these questions.



### Sugeli

A simple type of pasta prepared with just water and flour and made into little balls, which are then shaped with the typical "corpu de diu" (finger press). It is traditionally served with a white sauce made with fermented ricotta called *brusso* (bruss). This can be considered the "national" dish of the Ligurian Alps as it is spread all through the area of Monte Saccarello, in the brigasca area, Mendatica and its alpine huts, Montegrosso, Rezzo, Cosio, and Triora.



#### Ingredients

1 kg of flour  
2 tablespoons of extra-virgin olive oil  
20 g of salt

#### For the sauce

½ glass of extra-virgin olive oil  
2 cloves of garlic  
150 g of bruss  
1 glass of milk  
Oil, as needed  
2 potatoes

#### Preparation

Mix the flour with warm water, two tablespoons of extra-virgin olive oil, and salt. Knead until you get an even and smooth dough. Cut into balls and shape by pressing your finger into them. Cut two potatoes into chunks. Cook the sugeli and potatoes together in boiling water for 15 minutes. In another pan, fry a couple of cloves of garlic in the half glass of extra-virgin olive oil. Add 150 gr of bruss into the pan, along with a glass of milk and the oil, as needed. Drain the pasta and potatoes and sauté them in the pan with the bruss and then dish it up.

# REGIONAL NATURE RESERVE

## GALLINARA ISLAND



### HOW TO GET THERE

**By car**  
A10 motorway Genova – Ventimiglia: exit at Albenga.  
**By train**  
Genova-Ventimiglia line (Albenga station).  
**By sea**  
From the port of Laigueglia there are weekly visits in summer.  
[www.liguriaviamare.it](http://www.liguriaviamare.it)

The island is a private property and at the moment is not yet open, possible boat trips around the Gallinara

### LOCATION

Municipality of Albenga  
Piazza San Michele, 17  
Tel. +39 0182 5621  
17031 Albenga  
[turismo@comune.albenga.sv.it](mailto:turismo@comune.albenga.sv.it)  
[www.parks.it/riserva.isola.gallinara/Index.php](http://www.parks.it/riserva.isola.gallinara/Index.php)



### SURFACE AREA

11.00 hectares

### MUNICIPALITY

Albenga

Situated along the stretch of coast between Capo Santa Croce and the point of Vadino, Gallinara Island was detached from the mainland due to a rise in sea level during the Quaternary Period. The island has maintained a strong natural character. Its distinctive Mediterranean habitats are the euphorbia dendroides scrub and the holly oak (*Quercus ilex*) low and high scrub. The euphorbia dendroides is an interesting tertiary relict and forms bushes up to 2 metres in height which lose their leaves during summer. Most of the shrubs of the Mediterranean scrub, such as strawberry tree (*Arbutus unedo*), Spanish broom (*Spartium junceum*), thorny broom (*Calicotome spinosa*), Italian buckthorn (*Rhamnus alaternus*), Pistacia lentiscus, and common myrtle (*Myrtus*

communis), easily resist drought conditions thanks to essential oils in their leaves that can secure molecules of water. The island hosts almost 300 types of flora, including an endemic species exclusive to eastern Liguria, known as “campanula del savonese” (*Campanula sabatia* De Not.). It grows all along the coast between Bergeggi and the French border and it is the only Ligurian vegetation species of priority interest for Europe. It is also possible to do a virtual visit in the “Fortino Genovese” which is dated XVI century. Albenga is known for its flowers exported in all Europe and for its agriculture: can boast four typical produces: spiky artichokes, trombetta courgettes, cuore di bue tomatoes and purple asparaguses.

### RECOMMENDED ITINERARY

#### A dip in the history

The history centre of Albenga is one of the most important of Liguria. The name of “Albingaunum” has paleochristian and roman origins. It is ancient Medieval episcopal point. Infact we can see beautiful of its towers, buildings and monuments in archaeological areas, for example the Public Roman Therme which are in the River Centa. If we are in Vadino, we can go through ancient roman route: the Julia Augusta route that is a full of archaeological finds. The history of the town is inside in its Museum: in **Roman Naval Museum** we can see amphorae used for storing wine and tools

retrieved from the wreck of roman ship of the I Century BC, sunk off the coast of Albenga **The Diocesan Museum of Sacred Art** has inside a rich collection of art works which go back until one thousand years ago. The **Baptistery** (second half of V century) is one of the most important paleochristian monument of Liguria and Northern of Italy with a fine Byzantine mosaic. In **Palazzo Oddo** we can visit a permanent exhibition of about 200 antique glass pieces form the Albenga necropolis. The extraordinary Blue Plate from the II Century AD is a unique find and obviously the gem of the exhibition.



### PIGATO

The **Pigato grape** arrived in Liguria from Greece in the Middle Ages, from one of the Genoese colonies in the Aegean Sea. In 1830, the prelate Francesco Gagliolo planted the first vine in Ortovero (SV), but the wine was only put on the market by the winemaker Rodolfo Gaggino in 1950, at the price of 300 Lira. The best pigato grapes are generally cultivated on the hillside at heights of at least 300 metres above sea level: therefore, in an environment near the sea, but also with a

drop in temperatures at night which favours the wealth of aromas of this classic Ligurian wine. It is a straw coloured wine which tends to **turn golden** when aged. It has a full-bodied, dry flavour, with a bouquet of Mediterranean scrub and yellow pulp. It is a notably elegant wine. It should be drunk within three years, without letting it age too much, though this rule is very variable for certain reserves with particular shares of wood or vinifications.

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### Artichoke pie

#### Ingredients for the pastry

250 g of flour  
130 g of water  
2 tablespoons of extra-virgin olive oil  
salt, as needed

#### for the filling

5 Albenga artichokes  
extra-virgin olive oil  
½ onion  
1 teaspoon of parsley  
50 g of Parmigiano Reggiano cheese  
2 eggs  
200 g of prescinsêua  
salt, as needed



#### for the pastry

Mix together all the ingredients, gradually adding water a little at a time, until you get a soft dough. Leave to sit under a damp cloth.

#### for the filling

Fry the onion and parsley in the oil. Clean the artichokes, cutting off the stalk and external leaves. After chopping them into wedges, take out the central section. After washing them, cut them into thin slices and cook with extra-virgin olive oil and water, until they are soft. Then add them to the onion and parsley. Place the artichokes, the prescinsêua, eggs, and Parmigiano Reggiano into a bowl, mix together, and add salt if needed. Roll out 2-3 thin layers with half of the dough. Place one on top of the other, while brushing with oil, place the filling on top and close using 2-3 more layers rolled out using the rest of the dough. Brush the pie with an egg yolk and a small amount of oil and bake in the oven for 35-40 minutes at 160°C.





Gallinara Island



# REGIONAL NATURE RESERVE

## RIO TORSERO



### HOW TO GET THERE

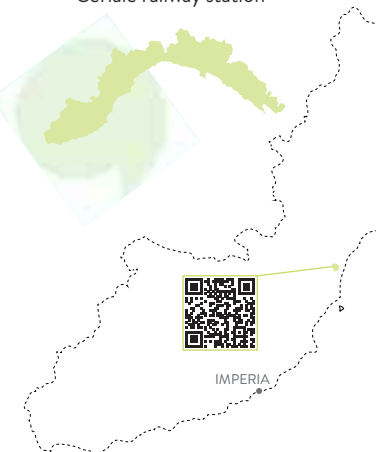
#### By car

Genova-Ventimiglia motorway, exit at Borghetto Santo Spirito, towards Ceriale.

From the Via Aurelia (SP1), in the centre of Ceriale, follow Via Romana uphill; at the first junction turn right onto Via Magnone, which becomes Via Nostra Signora delle Grazie once you get past the overpass over the A10. Continue straight until the crossroads where Via Nostra Signora delle Grazie, Strada Nuova di Peagna, Via Case Sottane, and Via Tecci e Paverne intersect.

#### By train

Albenga railway station  
Ceriale railway station



### LOCATION

Municipality of Ceriale  
Piazza Nuova Italia, 1  
17023 Ceriale (SV)  
Tel. +39 0182 91931  
[info@comune.ceriale.sv.it](mailto:info@comune.ceriale.sv.it)  
[www.parks.it/riserva.rio.torsero/Eindex.php](http://www.parks.it/riserva.rio.torsero/Eindex.php)



### SURFACE AREA

4.0 hectares

### MUNICIPALITY

Ceriale

Situated in the immediate hinterland of the town of **Ceriale**, the valley of Rio Torsero is very important from a palaeontological point of view as it hosts an extremely rich deposit of **fossils from the Pliocene era** (from 5.2 to 1.8 million years ago), notable for their exceptional conservation condition and the abundance and variety of the pieces. The River Torsero carved its bed from the sedimentary rocks of the “**Ortovero formation**”, unveiling the layers containing fossils. There are particularly high numbers of shellfish shells, belonging to classes of bivalvia,

gastropoda, and scaphopods (over two hundred species). There is no lack of corals, colonies of bryozoa, otoliths of fish, remains of echinoderms and crustaceans, and interesting types of micro-fossils. To protect the deposit, which has been studied since the start of the 19th century, the Regional Nature Reserve of the River Torsero was set up in 1985. A collection of fossils from the deposit can be found in the “**Silvio Lai**” museum in Peagna, a suburb of Ceriale, located just a few hundred metres from the reserve.

### RECOMMENDED ITINERARY

#### Discovering Ceriale

In the historical town centre of Ceriale, we can still admire some remains of the Medieval city walls and tower, in addition to the large tower (“**Torrione**”) erected in **1564** to protect from pirate attacks. In addition, the parish church of **Santi Giovanni Battista ed Eugenio**, rebuilt in 1637 after the sack of the town as mentioned above, contains paintings from the Genoa school of painting (Orazio De Ferrari, Piola, Carlone). We can also admire a wooden crucifix displaying notable craftsmanship which still features the hole of a sphere thrown by one of the Algerian marauders. Alongside the church we

find the oratory of **Santa Caterina**. The suburb of Peagna was the home of ancient, noble families such as the Girardenghi, Genta, and Arduini. The Medieval hamlet is characteristic with its old **church of San Giovanni Battista**, dating to the 14th century, with remains of frescoes from the 15th and 16th centuries and a Baroque style bell tower. The present-day parish church, located in the middle of the village, dates to the 18th century and shows hints of late-baroque style. Peagna also has “**Silvio Lai**” palaeontological museum full of fossil shells and ammonites dating to ancient eras and belonging to the Regional Nature Reserve of the River Torsero.



### TROMBETTA COURGETTE

The name “**trombetta**”, or trumpet, is justified by the thin, tubular, slender shape, with slightly broader ends. Its flesh is light yellow and is soft, compact, and in no way watery. It

has a very delicate flavour. It is very versatile in the kitchen and goes well with both **meat and fish dishes**. It is excellent to use in making quiches, frittata, and friscoe (fritters).

FLAGSHIP Product

### Bread-crumbed scorzonera de Seio

#### Ingredients

1 bunch of scorzonera  
3 eggs  
extra-virgin olive oil  
breadcrumbs, as needed  
salt, as needed

#### Preparation

Wash the scorzonera, cut it up into pieces, and boil it in salted water. Drain and leave to cool. Whisk the eggs, add some salt, and dip the scorzonera into the egg. Carefully let it drip and then dip it into the breadcrumbs. Heat the oil in a pan and fry the bread-crumbed scorzonera.



*Scorzonera* is a plant originally from eastern Europe and belonging to the *Asteraceae* family, the same as artichokes, radicchio, and Jerusalem artichoke. It is a perennial plant, cultivated annually, especially in Liguria, where its use is particularly widespread. The roots are harvested from October until the end of winter. The name of the species has uncertain origins. It may derive from “*scorzon*” in old French, “*Scorsone*” in Italian, and “*escorzonera*” in Spanish, which means black rind; and also “*viper*” perhaps due to the use of its roots as an antidote to snakebites. In Italian, the word scorzonera is mostly meant as scorza (rind) and nera (black).

# REGIONAL NATURE PARK BRIC TANA



## HOW TO GET THERE

*By car*  
A6 “Verdemare” motorway  
Torino – Savona, exit at Millesimo  
*By train*  
Cengio railway station 5 km away  
and San Giuseppe di Cairo railway  
station 8 km away

Strange **calcium spires** loom over the River Bormida, growing up from the chestnut groves and mixed forests of the small regional park of Bric Tana, with its important presence of surface and underground karst forms. In some caves there are niches where millstones were carved out by **patient stonecutters**, while prehistoric relics were found in the place called **Tana dell’Orpe**. Thanks to the palaeobotanical research related to the study of pollen found at the site, we now know about the primordial state of the area and the dietary habits of the ancient inhabitants. The Protected area of Bric Tana and **Valle dei Tre Re** was created to safeguard the karst phenomenon, with its sink-holes and ponors. The existence of a large ponor that can be explored called “Tana”

## LOCATION

Piazza Italia 2  
17017 Millesimo (SV)  
Tel. +39 019 564007  
[ufficio\\_tecnico@comune.millesimo.sv.it](mailto:ufficio_tecnico@comune.millesimo.sv.it)  
[www.parks.it/parco.bric.tana/Eindex.php](http://www.parks.it/parco.bric.tana/Eindex.php)



## SURFACE AREA

169 hectares

## MUNICIPALITY

Millesimo

(den) or, in the local dialect, “**Tana dra vurp**” (fox’s den), is a true central node where the nature and history of the protected area intersect. In the immediate surroundings of this geological phenomenon there is an archaeological site which boasts primary importance for Liguria and certain interest on a national level also.

## RECOMMENDED ITINERARY

### The Nature Trails of the Park

The nature trails – which together make up an itinerary to best visit the Park – run through the land in the **municipality of Millesimo**, which is also the body in charge of managing the area. The countryside features high hills; the climate is continental with wintertime temperatures dropping well below zero, while the heat is moderate in the summer. The network of the itinerary paths is divided up into **circular routes**. Three of them are called “short” and enable you to visit the various locations with their particular natural patrimony in just a short time. The other two “large” circuits cover a broader surface area, so that fitter

visitors can hike through the entire area.

### Short circuit: Millesimo – Bric Tana – Millesimo

From Millesimo you go along the provincial road to Murialdo up to the Torino-Savona motorway bridge. Under the bridge there is a small road going uphill to the left (Via Boschetto). Taking this, you will find the first trail signpost further on, alongside a millstone leaning against a small wall. The sign points right towards the road for Bric Tana. From here, if you look downhill, you can see the River **Bormida of Millesimo** held by a small dam; during the winter months, you can use binoculars to see the grey herons and cormorants resting on the poplars and alders that populate the opposite bank of the river.

## TRUFFLE

### The king of the table

The city of **truffles**, Millesimo and the surrounding hills are lands where expert truffle

hunters, organised in associations, find the precious tuber, **both black and white varieties**, the king of the table since ancient times. The quality of the land and environmental and climatic conditions bring the quality of the product to the heights of Alba truffles. Indeed, the two-day **National Truffle Festival** is held at Millesimo every year during the last week of September. In addition to offering side-shows and exhibitions, there are also conferences and discussions organised on the topic.



## Millesimo Risotto with truffle

### Ingredients

4 spring courgettes  
2 tablespoons of extra-virgin olive oil  
50 g of butter  
vegetable stock, as needed  
400 g of rice  
50 g of grated Parmigiano Reggiano cheese  
1 black truffle



### Preparation

Place 25 g of butter and the oil in a large pot. Slice the courgettes, add them to the pot and cover with the lid. Cook on a low heat for 10 minutes. In the meantime, keep the stock on the boil. Add the rice to the pot and gradually add the stock a little at a time, stirring constantly. When cooked, add the truffle, chopped up into tiny leaves, along with the remaining butter and the Parmigiano Reggiano, stirring well. Serve immediately, accompanying the dish with a good bottle of red wine.

(The recipe was kindly provided by Giovanna Dadone Bormida, who is an award-winning chef from the Ligurian Truffle Hunter and Farmer Association of Millesimo – The City of Truffles).

FLAGSHIP  
Product



# REGIONAL NATURE PARK

## PIANA CRIXIA



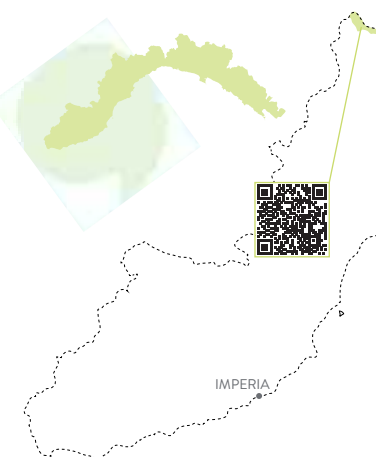
### HOW TO GET THERE

#### By car

Savona-Torino motorway  
To reach Piana Crixia by car, exit at the Altare-Carcare or Millesimo toll booth on the Savona-Torino motorway. Then follow the state road for Acqui Terme, going past Cairo Montenotte.

#### By train

You can also get to Piana Crixia by train (the Savona-Alessandria line). The railway station is located in the suburb Molino.



### LOCATION

Via Chiarlone, 47  
17058 Piana Crixia (SV)  
Tel. +39 019 570021  
[parco.pianacrixia@alice.it](mailto:parco.pianacrixia@alice.it)  
[www.parks.it/parco.piana.crixia/Eindex.php](http://www.parks.it/parco.piana.crixia/Eindex.php)



### SURFACE AREA

795 hectares

### MUNICIPALITY

Piana Crixia

Piana Crixia is located in a strategic position at the foot of the Ligurian Apennines, just 35 km from Savona and the same distance from the town of Acqui Terme, already famous back in Roman times for its sulphurous, boiling waters. The paternal grandmother of Pope Francis was born in Piana Crixia (in the hamlet of Cagna, now called San Massimo) in 1884 and, still today, we can see the houses where “Grandmother Rosa Margherita Vassallo” was born and lived during her youth, along with the Baptistery where she was baptised in the church of San Massimo. From June 26th to July 5th, the prestigious **Market of the Piana** Tourist Office is held in Piana Crixia. This festival, which involves every citizen of Piana, is like the local EXPO where the typical

wine and food products (where the famous *Ravioli alla Pianese* are the tastiest emblem of the entire gastronomic stand) are united with open-air live music and small commercial activities from Valle Bormida.

### RECOMMENDED ITINERARY

**From “stone mushroom” to the flavours of the land**  
During the entire calendar year, you can visit the evocative **ice house** (dating to the end of the 19th century) and the old irrigation canal, which has now become a waterway that connects the village and the Park area where we can admire, from a geomorphological point of view, the **Stone mushroom** and the meanders of the River Bormida and, from an architectural and landscape view point, the monumental parish church of Santi Eugenio, Vittore e Corona,

the oratory of Annunziata, and the picturesque hamlet typically arranged in terraces with, above it, the barely visible ruins of the medieval castle with its reconstruction in

### THE SPRING BLOSSOMING OF SPONTANEOUS ORCHIDS

In the patches of meadows and the glades we find around twenty different species of **spontaneous orchids** which, along with notable scientific interest, are also a wonderful sight with their shapes and colours, something to look out for while you are walking along the gullies of one of the various visiting itineraries offered. You certainly

the 20th century found on the slopes. Moreover, you can find all the shops and restaurants where you can buy and taste the traditional dishes from Liguria and Piedmont near this trail.

should not miss the duo of the “Giro basso dei calanchi” (low gully trail) and *Himantoglossum adriaticum* which matches the small orchid characterised by a large “tongue” with the appeal of the imposing forms which erosion moulded into the clayish rocks of the slopes of the hills of Piana, criss-crossed with the branching cracks which water carved into the land, creating fascinating geometrical hieroglyphics.



### TONDA GENTILE HAZELNUT

The **hazelnut** is the fruit of the common hazel (*Corylus avellana*), a tree originally from Europe and Asia Minor, which belongs to the Corylaceae family. The hazel groves we find inside the Park belong to the cultivar called **Tonda Gentile Trilobata** – known

as “Tonda Gentile delle Langhe” up to recently – which is the most widespread cultivar in Langhe and in Liguria. The nuts are light in colour and have a thin shell. They have a high yield from shelling (46-48%) and the nut has a great aroma and a **delicate flavour**. The fat level is low and, therefore, it conserves well without turning

### Langa hazelnut cake

#### Ingredients

100 g of “Tonda Gentile delle Langhe” hazelnuts  
100 g of sugar  
1 egg  
100 g of plain flour  
75 g of dry amaretti biscuits  
100 g of butter  
½ sachet of baking powder for desserts



#### Preparation

Mix the egg with the sugar, flour, and butter. Shell the hazelnuts and toast in the oven until they turn golden, then chop them up finely together with the dry amaretti biscuits. Mix them in well with the dough, adding the baking powder. Then pour it all into a buttered tin and bake in a fan oven at 180°C for approximately 45 minutes.

(Kindly provided by centennial Trattoria Tripoli).

rancid. The nut is second only to almonds in terms of **vitamin E levels**.

Due to its good yield and, above all, its organoleptic qualities it is considered the most esteemed variety on a global level and its entire harvest is bought up by the sweet-making industry.





# REGIONAL NATURE RESERVE

## ADELASIA



### HOW TO GET THERE

#### By car

A6 Torino – Savona, exit at Carcare, towards Altare to SP 12 Savona – Altare.

From Savona – SS 29 of Colle di Cadibona towards Turin, at Altare take the SP 12 Savona – Altare towards Savona.

#### By train

Torino-Savona rail line, Ferrania railway station.

#### By bus

EscursioniBUS, upon request, Freephone number 800 012727 (call 48 hours in advance).

### LOCATION

Via Sormano, 12  
17100 Savona  
Tel. +39 019 8313432  
ceap@provincia.savona.it  
www.parks.it/riserva.adelasia/  
Eindex.php



### SURFACE AREA

1273 hectares

### MUNICIPALITY

Cairo Montenotte

Geomorphological protrusions, **abundance of water** and majestic **beech tree forests**, together with typical Mediterranean vegetation formations, **meadows** full of **orchids** and glades, are the main characteristics of the sole Ligurian Reserve that is fully publicly owned. The name derives from the rock

called after the **Princess Adelasia**, the daughter of Otto I of Saxony who, legend has it, eloped to Liguria with her beloved Aleramo, the squire she married against her father's will, and found safe refuge here in these woods.

These places were also the setting of the **battle of Montenotte** fought in April 1796 between the Austrian and Piedmontese allies and the French troupes commanded by **Napoleon** in a crucial time of modern history. We can still see traces of that battle among the woods, with the trenches at Bric Tesoro - Castellazzo, places which still show great charm: people say that they talk to those who know how to listen, telling in their own way what happened 200 years ago.

### RECOMMENDED ITINERARY

#### Following Napoleon's footsteps

Starting from Savona towards the **Sanctuary of Savona**, a spectacular basilica dedicated to the Virgin Mary on the site where **Our Lady of Mercy** appeared to the saint Antonio Botta in 1536. Here, Napoleon organised the details of the counter-attack of Montenotte. Then you climb up towards Mount Negino, where the French lines were positioned, with remains of the fortifications still there today, and continue on in the direction of **Montenotte** where you

find the **Adelasia Regional Nature Reserve** which still has well-visible traces of the famous battle among the woods (trekking enthusiasts should not miss a night in the Cascina Miera shelter in the Reserve for a unique experience among nature, history and legend with routes suited to everybody, including by mountain bike or horse). The itinerary then continues, passing by the suburb **Ferriera di Montenotte** turning towards **Dego**, where the battle of the same name took place.



### THE MUSHROOMS

The Reserve is found in a **Site of Community Importance (S.C.I.)**, including a complex group of slopes and valley floors which feature high biodiversity values with forest formations, dry meadows, and humid zones. This rich, varied panorama creates an environment that is particularly favourable to the growth of mushrooms: an authentic paradise, not only for the **"mushroom pickers"** who come in their thousands

every autumn to pick the delicious **porcini** and **caesar's mushrooms**, but also for researchers and scholars, given the presence of extremely rare species and new to Liguria, such as **Russula carpinii**, **Russula puellula Ebbesen**, **Phanerochaete velutina**, and **Cortinarius caesioflavescens**, a particularly interesting species because this is the first time it has been found in Italy.

FLAGSHIP  
Product

### Tagliolini alla povera (Poor Man's Tagliolini)

#### Ingredients for the pasta

500 g of all-purpose flour  
5 whole eggs  
10 bunches of nettles, boiled in advance  
salt, as needed for the sauce  
400 g of porcini mushrooms  
200 g of jowl bacon  
1 shallot  
1 matured toma cheese from Val Bormida  
extra-virgin olive oil  
white wine, as needed



#### Preparation for the pasta

Make dough by mixing the flour with the egg yolks and the nettles, well squeezed and chopped up. Add the egg whites and salt a little at a time. Prepare small portions with the dough, around 80-90 g each, roll them out, leave to rest, and then prepare the tagliolini.

#### for the sauce

Wash the porcini mushrooms well, eliminating the earth with a brush. Dice the stalks and slice the heads. Brown half the shallot in some oil, add a dash of wine, and add in the mushroom stalks. Once they are cooked, blend into a cream that is not too thick. Brown the other half shallot in oil, add a dash of wine, and then the jowl bacon. Once browned, add in the sliced mushrooms. Cook the tagliolini, adding one tablespoon of oil and salt into the water. Then sauté in the pan with the sauce and grate some toma cheese on top.

(Kindly provided by Locanda dei Frè).

# MARINE PROTECTED AREA

## ISLAND OF BERGEGGI



### HOW TO GET THERE

#### By car

You can exit the A10 at the Savona toll booth or at Spotorno-Noli, or you can take the state highway no. 1 Aurelia, towards Genova-Ventimiglia and vice versa.

#### By train

The closest railway station is Spotorno-Noli; as an alternative, get off at Savona station and continue the journey by public bus.

### LOCATION

Via De Mari, 28/D  
17028 Bergeggi (SV)  
Tel. +39 019 25790201  
bergeggi@comune.bergeggi.sv.it  
www.ampisolabergeggi.it



A spur of rock covered in Mediterranean brush in the middle of the sea, sea beds with corals and meadows of *Posidonia oceanica*, a rocky coast made of cliffs, caves, and inlets: this is the Protected Marine Area called the "Island of Bergeggi", a treasure chest of bio-diversity, history, and legends. The coast is watched over by a small village sheltered on the slopes

of Mount Sant'Elena, the church of San Martino, the square with the school and the houses surrounded by dry-stone walls and *caruggi* (alleyways) which steeply lead down to the sea. The beaches of Bergeggi with their **crystal clear waters** are perfect for practising water sports in almost any time of the year: diving, snorkelling, swimming, sailing, windsurfing, kayaking, stand up paddling, fishing, excursions, and many more. The **Blue Flag** of the beaches (starting from 1997) and the Environmental Certificate ISO14001 (since 2007) testify the daily effort being made to improve the quality of life for citizens and tourists. The stretch of the coast overlooking the island of Bergeggi boasts Liguria's most well-known **sea cave**. Used since ancient times, numerous palethnological remains were found inside the cave dating to the Neolithic period, testifying the cave's use as both a burial and living space.

### RECOMMENDED ITINERARY

The equipped **botanical path** clammers up among the typical Ligurian terracing cultivations, through the "**Natte**" **cork oak wood** (the largest of its kind in eastern Liguria),

passes near to the **Fort of Sant'Elena** which dominates the entire coast, rises up to **Castellaro** – an ancient settlement of the first Ligurians - and then descends back down to **Torre del Mare**. From here, following the historical *carruggi*, you reach the coast and then continue the walk along by the sea. The itinerary weaves among the historical-archaeological, botanical, and naturalistic sites in the heart of the Bergeggi Regional Nature Reserve with spectacular views of the Island and the coast, among glimpses of the unexpected beauty of the high cliffs plunging down into the sea, opening out into the **sea cave**.



### FISH ON THE TABLE: sustainable consumption

Within the Protected Marine Area, human activities are managed in a sustainable manner and artisan fishermen, conserving an ancient culture, when they carry out their activity in a **responsible** manner, are not only compatible with the needs of the Protected Marine Area, but also represent a true patrimony of the area. If we

want to save precious biological resources from collapse, while simultaneously preserving the **tradition of artisan fishing**, "good" food must inevitably be "good" for the environment as well; the fish from the **Island of Bergeggi** Protected Marine Area fished from the sea at Noli, are protected by the Slow Food Movement.

FLAGSHIP Product

## Ciuppin or Fish soup

### Ingredients

2 kg of various types of fish (cuttlefish, silver scabbardfish, rockfish, weaverfish, atlantic stargazers, tub gurnards, eels, red mullet, wrasses)  
50 g of pine nuts  
1 stalk of white celery  
1 carrot  
1 shallot  
1 leek  
tomatoes, as needed  
1 glass of *Vermentino* white wine  
fish fumet, as needed  
2 cloves of garlic  
parsley, as needed  
rosemary, as needed  
saffron pistils  
nutmeg, to taste  
extra-virgin olive oil  
salt, as needed  
pepper, as needed



### Preparation

In an earthenware pan, heat a minced mixture of garlic, parsley, and pine nuts in extra-virgin olive oil. Add the chopped-up shallot, white celery, carrot, leek, and rosemary. Wet with a splash of *Vermentino* wine and cook for at least 15 minutes. Add the saffron pistils, some grated nutmeg, well-ripe tomatoes, and, if needed, the fish fumet prepared in the meantime with the fish scraps. Add all of the fish to the sauce, and sauté it for a few minutes. Pour in the rest of the fumet until all the fish is covered well, and cook for approximately 30 minutes. Blend it all and add salt and pepper if needed. Dress with a drizzle of extra-virgin olive oil. Serve with croutons.



# REGIONAL NATURE PARK

## BEIGUA



### HOW TO GET THERE

#### By car

A10 Genova – Ventimiglia: exit at Genova-Voltri, Arenzano, Varazze, Celle Ligure, and Albisola; A26 Voltri – Santhià: exit at Masone.

#### By train

Genova – Ventimiglia line: the railway stations of Voltri, Arenzano, Cogoleto, Varazze, Celle Ligure, and Albisola. Genova – Ovada line: the railway stations of Campo Ligure and Rossiglione.

#### By bus

ATP Genoa Provincial Transport Company ([www.atpesercizio.it](http://www.atpesercizio.it))  
TPL Savona Line ([www.tpllinea.it](http://www.tpllinea.it))  
ARFEA Alessandria ([www.arfea.it](http://www.arfea.it))

In a land rich in contrasts like Liguria, nestled between the mountains and the sea, the Park of Beigua – **the largest natural protected area in Liguria** – is a perfect example of the region where you can find, in close quarters, environments and landscapes that are so different from one another, leaving visitors stunned. A spectacular balcony formed

by mountains facing out onto the sea, where nature, history, culture, and ancient traditions are extraordinarily precious and note-worthy elements. The Beigua district was included under the prestigious list of **international geoparks** under the aegis of UNESCO in 2005. The natural protected area is a special land, not only due to the conservation of the biodiversity and the geodiversity, but also because of the protection of the cultural identity of each community found within it. There are various initiatives activated to promote and enhance **local productions**, involving **agricultural and agritourism enterprises**, in order to support a sustainable development of the local economy, including by reviving traditional productions and

### LOCATION

Via G. Marconi, 165  
16011 Arenzano (GE)  
Tel. +39 010 8590300  
[info@parcobeigua.it](mailto:info@parcobeigua.it)  
[www.parcobeigua.it](http://www.parcobeigua.it)

### SURFACE AREA

8715 hectares

### MUNICIPALITIES

Arenzano, Campo Ligure, Cogoleto, Genoa, Masone, Rossiglione, Sassello, Stella, Tiglieto, Varazze



fostering the commercialisation of products in a network of the local market and also broader forms of distribution. There are numerous delicacies to be discovered and tasted in agricultural and agritourism enterprises and at the inns and restaurants of the

### RECOMMENDED ITINERARY

#### The Park honey route

Reaching the Stura Valley from Passo del Turchino, you come to Masone, the perfect location for relaxing strolls through the woods, to discover the processing of the cheese made with the milk produced from the grazing animals of Beigua, to taste the delicious “crumiri” biscuits and the surprising honeys of the beekeeping enterprise *Amè d’Masun*, which with its 160 beehives spread out between five apiaries, is one of the most important producers in the Park. When you cross the village of Masone you come to **Campo Ligure**, with the

Beigua district. There is a notable ancient tradition in the confectionery industry: including *amaretti di Sassello*, now exported all over the world, the exquisite *crumiri di Masone*, and the *canestrelli di Sambuco*. These are completed by the wide

majestic 15th century Medieval castle which stands over the red roofs and beautiful frescoed and decorated buildings of the historical centre. For centuries it was fief of the Spinola family and now is the capital of filigree and is part of the “Italy’s most beautiful hamlets” circuit. At Campo Ligure you can find *Cascina Fornacia*, a small family-led beekeeping enterprise that produces delicious fruit jams made from the harmonious union of honey and forest fruits. Following along the main road, you come to **Rossiglione**, famous for its traditional autumn event held on the first Sunday of October dedicated to

range of **dairy products** (milk and cheese), the different processings of **beef and lamb**, the colourful and tasty **forest fruits**, the coveted picking and conservation of **mushrooms and chestnuts**, in addition to the delicious **honey**, all precious environmental indicators of the Park’s wide valleys.

chestnuts and the spectacular **canyon of the Gargassa Valley**. The itinerary continues, leaving behind it the road leading to Ovada, following in the footsteps of the Cistercian monks towards **Tiglieto**, in the Upper Valley of the River Orba, where the abbey of Santa Maria alla Croce was built in 1120. Here too you buy excellent honey at the *Vinazza beekeepers*. The culinary route through the heart of the Park of Beigua crosses through the suburbs of Urbe, then reaches the historic centre of **Sassello**, the first Italian municipality to be granted the **Orange Flag of the Italian Touring Club** for the tourist and environmental quality of the hinterland. The amaretto capital, Sassello is famous all over Liguria for the wealth found in the forest undergrowth and the prestige of the porcini mushrooms. Just a short distance from the centre, it is worth visiting another prestigious beekeeping enterprise, called *la Bottinatrice*, which produces amazing biological honey. Then going uphill towards the soft slopes of Mount Beigua, you cross through the thick **beech tree woods of Piampaludo and Pratorotondo**, precious treasure chests of various species of mushrooms,





wonderful to take photographs of and delicious to eat cooked. Once you get to the top of Mount Beigua and pass by the **Plain of Stella**, the tortuous descent towards



### THE CISTERCIAN ABBEY OF TIGLIETO

Founded in 1120, the abbey of **Santa Maria e Santa Croce of Tiglieto** was the first Cistercian monastery built in Italy and outside France. The Romanesque complex is comprised of the church, the monastery, and the refectory on three sides of the cloister, with the fourth side bordering areas used for agricultural use. In the middle of the Medieval era, when the first monks arrived from Cîteaux, there were no settlements in the plain of Tiglieto, surrounded by thick woods and isolated by the mountains behind it. Also, the ground was marshy due to the nearby **River Orba**. It was the perfect place to ensure the solitude of the community of brothers, but not complete isolation thanks to the

the sea begins; a spectacular panoramic road leads from the ridge to mixed woods with broad-leaved trees typical of the Alpicella area, famous for its rock walls to be climbed (“bouldering”)

nearby important connecting roads towards the towns of Genoa and Savona. From its foundation onwards, the monks dedicated themselves to the cultivation of the land and farming and woodland activities, looking after the woods, picking fruit and trading



and for the Neolithic settlements of the “Rock shelter of Fenestrelle”. Before reaching Varazze, we recommend stopping off to taste the honey produced by the *beekeeping enterprise Emilia Montali* in Campomarzio. Once you reach the coastal stretch, you go past the beautiful beaches of **Varazze**, **Cogoleto**, and **Arenzano**, enjoying wonderful panoramas over the Gulf of Liguria, to then arrive at the last stop-off of our itinerary which we reach by climbing back up the green Cerusa Valley, on the heights of **Genoa-Voltri**, where in Sambugo you can appreciate the delicious honey of the *agricultural enterprise of Francesco Bozzano*, a genuine testimonial of the passion of these lands.

products with the neighbouring areas. In recent years, there have been important restoration works carried out on the Abbey, including with the support of the Managing Body of the Park of Beigua, which have brought back to the surface the ancient splendour of these places.



### AMARETTI DI SASSELLO

The amaretti biscuits are extremely high quality, created with the ingredients of an ancient recipe that dates to the 19th century: **almonds**, **apricot kernels**, egg white, and sugar. The apricot kernels are a vital ingredient which characterise the amaretti and distinguish their flavour. In Liguria, there are abundant crops of apricots whose stone contains a very particular bitter almond, the *armellina*, which must be skilfully balanced with the classic sweet almond. The amaretti are

produced via a delicate process: the rolling, where the dough is placed on the baking trays in small portions; the baking, and, above all, the wrapping in the traditional bow shape. This is why the amaretto is round and a bit squashed, with a soft and aromatic heart and the characteristic slightly bitter flavour. Recently, in addition to the traditional version, new multi-flavoured amaretti are being produced, with a rich variety of flavours (rum, hazelnut, chocolate, mandarin, coconut, lemon). The companies from Sassello that produce these tasty biscuits are *Giacobbe*, *Virginia*, *Isaia*, *La Sassellese*, *Amaretti Vittoria* – *Panarello*, *Biscottificio del Sassello* – *Baratti & Milano*, and some local confectioners.



FLAGSHIP  
Product

### Bunettu (custard)

The bunettu is a custard with an ancient tradition, typical of Liguria and Piedmont (bunet). On special feast days, to add some prestige to the dessert, the precious Amaretti di Sassello were added to the custard. Traditionally the bunettu was cooked in a copper mould placed on a wood-burning stove.

#### Ingredients

5 fresh eggs  
1 litre of milk  
8 armelline (kernels from peach or apricot seeds)  
200 g of sugar (150 g to be melted in the milk for the cream, 50 g for the caramel)  
3 soft Amaretti di Sassello biscuits  
1 glass of Vermouth



#### Preparation

Place the kernels in a glass of lukewarm water for a few minutes. Peel them and crush with a mortar and pestle until they became a paste. Break and whip the eggs. Crumble up the amaretti with your hands. Place the milk, sugar, armelline paste, crumbled-up amaretti, whipped eggs and Vermouth into a container. Then pour the resulting mixture into a large custard mould. Cook using the “bain-marie” method for approximately four hours, placing the mould into a wide saucepan, taking care to add more water to the pan when it evaporates. When the bunettu is cooked, leave it to cool down and then take it out of the mould. Turn upside down and serve on a plate accompanied by a glass of Passito wine.





View from Mount Beigua



# PROTECTED NATURAL AREA OF LOCAL INTEREST **MURA PARK**



## HOW TO GET THERE

**By car**  
A10 Fiori motorway, Genova – Ventimiglia, exit at Genova Ovest  
A12 motorway Genova – Rosignano, exit at Genova Est  
A26 motorway Voltri – Gravellona, which connects to the A10 at Voltri  
A7 motorway Genova – Milano, exit at Genova Ovest

**By train**  
Genova Principe and Genova Brignole railway stations.  
The Park is connected to main Italian and European cities by Regional, Intercity, and Eurostar trains.

**By aeroplane**  
Cristoforo Colombo airport  
[www.airport.genova.it](http://www.airport.genova.it)

Behind the Old Port and the historical city, in the barycentre position with respect to the linear progression of the coast and the urban extension along the rivers Polcevera and Bisagno, historical axes of communication between the sea and the Po Valley, the Mura Park boasts characteristics of high levels of nature and is the largest green area of the city. It quickly reaches 600 metres

## LOCATION

Municipality of Genoa  
Via Garibaldi, 9  
16124 Genoa  
[parcodellemura@comune.genova.it](mailto:parcodellemura@comune.genova.it)  
[www.parks.it/parco.mura/Eindex.php](http://www.parks.it/parco.mura/Eindex.php)  
IAT  
Tel. +39 010 55729031  
[info@visitgenoa.it](mailto:info@visitgenoa.it)



## SURFACE AREA

611.69 hectares

## MUNICIPALITY

Genoa

above sea level with highly panoramic points with 360° views over the city, Corsica, and the Alps.

## RECOMMENDED ITINERARY

### The fortifications route

This land conserves notable signs of the urban history of Genoa: the historic aqueduct, an ancient and complex structure used to supply the city with water; sixteen towers and fortresses built between the second half of the 18th century and the first half of the 19th century; the imposing city walls dating to 1626, which limited the city's growth until last century, with 13 of the original 20 km still conserved in a good state, making them the longest in Europe, an inseparable historical and landscape pairing with the Park and the distinctive symbol of the city. In addition, there are numerous other testimonies of past history conserved in the Park: archaeological sites, monasteries and convents

along the routes climbing back up in the city, the “villa residences”, rural nuclei that represent interesting historical agricultural structures. The land is also full of traces of the main roads of passage between the port of Genoa and the Po Valley regions: the Roman Via Postumia over the River Polcevera, the ancient Via del Sale (Salt Road), then retraced in Medieval times by Via dei Feudi Imperiali over the River Bisagno, comprising the matrix of the settlements outside the city along the edge of the Park. There are also the traditional pedestrian

paths linking the ancient city to the hills: the steep stoned uphill paths to the new walls whose six gateways link up to the two valleys; link-up pathways halfway up the slope and on the ridges; 19th century military mule tracks which connect the forts lying more inland; mechanical lines built between the end of the 19th century and the start of the 20th century (Zecca-Righi funicular, Principe-Granarolo cog railway, narrow gauge railway, the so-called Casella train, which runs along the eastern edge of the Mura Park and connects it up to Antola Regional Park).

## FLAGSHIP Product

## BASIL

Basil is one of the most **typical cultivations of Liguria**, the symbol of agriculture suspended on the sea and a

cuisine with ancient flavours. Dating back centuries, the cultivation of basil has been enjoying unprecedented popularity in recent years. Basil was introduced to various areas of the Mediterranean and to Liguria itself by the Romans, who considered it to have medicinal properties. It became a traditional cultivation in Genoa starting

from the 19th century thanks to the introduction of greenhouses to agriculture in a strongly agricultural area: the western side of Genoa. Genoese basil, or **Basilico Genovese DOP**, is protected by the EU under “protected designation of origin” label of quality. The certificate was granted following the demonstration of the influence of the environment and the traditional production techniques handed down over time in obtaining an inimitable product, the basic ingredient in the recipe for Genoese pesto.



## Trenette al pesto

### Ingredients for the pesto (with a mortar and pestle)

70 g of leaves of *Basilico Genovese DOP*  
50 g of Parmigiano Reggiano cheese (matured 36 months)  
10 g of Pecorino Sardo cheese (matured 15 months)  
2 tablespoons of top choice fresh pine nuts from Pisa  
3 cloves of garlic from Vessalico  
1 pinch of cooking salt  
3 tablespoons of extra-virgin olive oil

### for the pasta

670 g of durum wheat flour  
1 egg  
20 g of white wine  
255 g of water



### Preparation for the pesto

Clean the garlic and crush it with the mortar and pestle until it becomes a paste, add the pine nuts and then the basil and salt. Press (no longer crushing) for some time, turning it around in order to get an even paste; at the end, add the Parmigiano, the Pecorino, and the oil a little at a time.

### for the pasta

Spill the flour onto a pastry board. Pour the egg, wine, and some of the water into the middle. Mix the liquid and gradually add in the flour and the remaining water. Knead until the dough is sufficiently elastic and smooth, not sticky. Leave to stand for about an hour. With the rolling pin, start to roll out one part of the dough up to approximately 3 mm in height and then use the pastry wheel to cut out strips 5 mm wide. As you go, place the strips to dry on a cloth sprinkled with flour.

# REGIONAL NATURE PARK ANTOLA



## HOW TO GET THERE

### By car

A7 Genova – Milano (exit at Busalla, Ronco Scrivia, Isola del Cantone); A12 Genova – Rosignano (exit at Genova Est, SS 45 state highway Genova – Piacenza)

Main roads: S.S. 35 “dei Giovi”; S.S. 45 Genova – Piacenza; S.P. 226.

### By train

Genova – Arquata Scrivia line and with the Genova – Casella railroad

### By bus

ATP S.p.A. (Provincial transport company) lines leaving from Genoa

### By foot

From Alta Via dei Monti Liguri, through the two crossings of Crocetta d’Orero and Passo della Scoffera

In the heart of the Ligurian Apennines, the **Regional Nature Park of Antola** ranges over the upper Scrivia and Trebbia valleys, in a mountainous land which holds great patrimony of nature and biodiversity, history and architecture, and traditions.

The crossing of numerous paths and

## LOCATION

Scientific offices: La Torriglietta,  
Via N.S. Provvidenza 3  
16029 Torriglia (GE)  
Tel. +39 010 944175  
[info@parcoantola.it](mailto:info@parcoantola.it)  
[www.parcoantola.it/Eindex.php](http://www.parcoantola.it/Eindex.php)



## SURFACE AREA

4837 hectares

## MUNICIPALITIES

Busalla, Crocefieschi, Fascia, Gorreto, Montebruno, Propata, Ronco Scrivia, Rondanina, Savignone, Torriglia, Valbrenna, Vobbia

ancient mule tracks, Mount Antola is the centre of an imposing mountain chain which spreads out like a sunburst from the panoramic climax, at the borders of four regions (Liguria, Piedmont, Lombardy, and Emilia Romagna).

There are numerous paths climbing up from the old rural hamlets towards the peak of Mount Antola. Hikers are greeted with an extraordinary panorama ranging from the Ligurian Sea to the north-western Alpine arch. From the beginning of spring onwards, the soft chalky slopes of Antola display beautiful and abundant blossomings including **narcissus**, the Park’s symbol flower. The conglomerate formation which

emerges in the most western part of the protected area, on the other hand, gives unusual and spectacular forms to the land, creating canyons with rugged sides, overhanging pinnacles and walls that make perfect habitats for numerous birds of prey and feature characteristic rocky vegetation.

There many food farming products of the Park included in the *Regional roadmap of traditional products*: in order to indicate the local origin a label was set up called “**The Flavours of the Park**”, fruit of a careful promotional and development policy of the Local Market Network. These include the **meat of Antola** and the delicious **mostardella sausage**, the honey and the delicate **rose syrup from the Scrivia Valley**, without forgetting potatoes and chestnuts, the food of bygone times. Those with a sweet tooth just cannot miss the local **pandolce** (sweet bread) and the delicious **canestrelletti di Torriglia** biscuits, one of the Park’s top products.



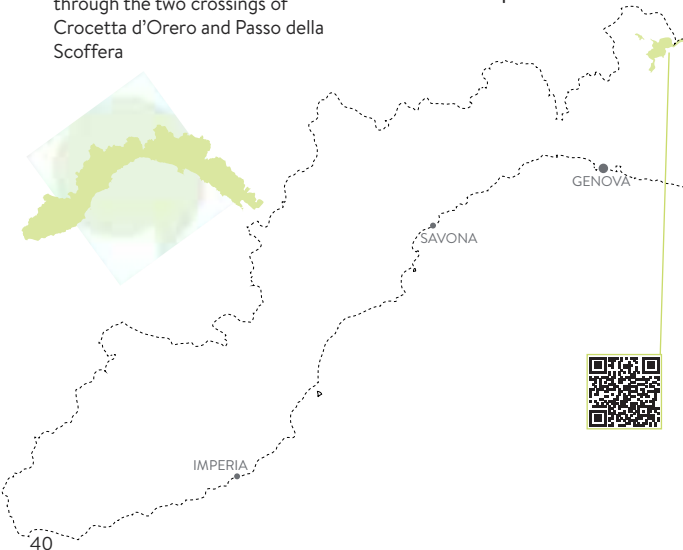
## RECOMMENDED ITINERARY Itinerary 1

From the motorway exit at Isola del Cantone (A7 motorway Genova-Milano), you take the provincial road no. 8 which goes up the **Vobbia Valley** and weaves along the evocative canyon carved out by the river from the conglomerate rock. Massive and, at the same time, easily fractured, the conglomerate gives unusual and spectacular forms to the land,

creating canyons with rugged sides, overhanging pinnacles and walls that recall an Alpine environment. Wedged between two natural defensive towers, the **Castello della Pietra** in Vobbia dominates the valley with its admirable uniqueness.

A stop-off in the town of **Vobbia** means you can taste the delicious **mostardella**, a typical sausage made with raw beef and pork. You then follow on towards **Crocefieschi** where you come upon the road for **Nenno and the Brevenna Valley**, as far as the village of Avosso. In this area, the breeding of cattle and pigs guarantees the production of the typical **Formaggetta** and **ricotta cheese of the Scrivia Valley**.

From Avosso, going along the provincial road 226 towards **Busalla**, you reach Savignone with the chance to visit the various agricultural enterprises which produce the rose syrup of the Scrivia Valley.







The traditional *Rose Festival* which is held in Busalla every year on the second weekend of June sees all the producers attending and offers the opportunity to taste the syrup and discover the many possible combinations.

#### Itinerary 2

This itinerary starts off in the Medieval hamlet of Torriglia, at the foot of the ancient Castle Fieschi and Mount Prelà, with the rivers Trebbia and Scrivia running down from the latter's slopes. To reach Torriglia, you just need to

take the **famous state highway no. 45** from Genoa for around 25 km, which weaves along the Trebbia Valley on its way down to Piacenza. Along the streets of the hamlet, an intense aroma invites you to enter into the many stores and taste the typical *canestrelletto* biscuits. In May of every year, the traditional Festival is held in honour of this typical biscuit made with flour, eggs, butter, and sugar. In Torriglia you can also taste the honey, a traditional food farming product that

#### MOUNT ANTOLA AND VIA DEL MARE

A crossing of numerous paths and ancient mule tracks, the peak of Mount Antola (1597 metres above sea level) is an important hub of the hiking network along the Ligurian Apennines. Human presence on this mountain goes back to ancient times: from shepherds with their flocks and merchants heading towards the plain, to people out picking medicinal herbs and

modern hikers, attracted by the undisputed landscape and naturalistic value of this land. There are many itineraries leading up to the peak, including short, easy tracks by foot, by mountain bike or by horse or long itineraries for a few days trekking, like the **Via del Mare**, the "highest" of the salt route which, passing by Antola, still today

is the symbol of the environmental quality of this area. From Torriglia, drive along the provincial road no. 15 of **Val Brugneto** which offers evocative panoramic glimpses of **Brugneto Lake** and the meadows of **Antola**. Here, from early spring to early autumn, you can hear the bells of the cows out to pasture. The meat from Antola is one of the most recognisable products with "The Flavours of the Park" logo. Once past the town of Propata, the itinerary follows on towards **Casa del Romano** and the **Cassinghen Valley**: in the spring, the mowed meadows enable you to admire, even from the side of the road, the copious and perfumed blossomings of narcissus, the symbolic flower of the protected area. Once you get back to SS 45 in **Beinaschi**, you continue in the direction of Genoa once again. In **Montebruno**, a historical village located on the left bank of the River Trebbia, you can have a "sweet" break with *canestrelli* and *pandolce*.

connects the Po Valley and the hills of the Oltrepò Pavese area to the promontory of Portofino and the sea. Just a few minutes' walk from the top of Mount Antola you can find food and drinks at the **Rifugio escursionistico Parco Antola** refuge with the possibility to stay overnight (30 beds in shared rooms, for information contact: T. +39 339 4874872 - [www.rifugioantola.com](http://www.rifugioantola.com)).

#### ROSE SYRUP

The **rose syrup** is produced in the Scrivia Valley. For centuries and until some decades ago, in the Scrivia Valley (in the Genoa hinterland) it was very common in the gardens of the country homes to cultivate these specific roses whose petals were used to make syrup, jams and other particular recipes, also used for their medicinal properties. The environmental conditions of the Scrivia Valley are favourable for planting *rosaceae* in general and roses in particular: the main varieties used for this purposes are some of the oldest species, *rugosa* and *muscosa*, selected over time until they reached a rustic quality and a rate of adaptation to the land that they are suitable for "natural" production. By researching texts and gathering testimonies on the field, the association of local producers recovered the ancient recipes for rose syrup and jam, to save from oblivion this traditional product with many virtues. Rose petal syrup has an intense colour and aroma;

it is made with just roses, sugar, and lemon, without any colourings or preservatives, in small laboratories with flowers cultivated in the valley without any use of chemical products. It can be **used as a drink** diluted in cool water, or added to white wine as an aperitif. It can replace sugar in hot tea and gives a particular flavour to **sorbets** and **ice-cream**, **panna cotta**, **yoghurt**, **fruit salads**, and **crêpes**. It is protected by the Slow Food Movement.

FLAGSHIP  
Product

#### Rose Syrup

##### Ingredients

1 l of spring water  
1 kg of sugar  
from 300 g to 500 g of petals of roses suited to syrup  
1 lemon, its juice



##### Preparation

Bring the water to the boil. Take off the heat and add the rose petals. Energetically mix the infusion until all the petals are incorporated into the liquid. Add the juice of one lemon. Leave to stand for 24 hours at room temperature. Once the time of infusion has passed, place the liquid into a container, including that obtained from manually squeezing the petals (the petal mush must be squeezed, compact and dry). Filter the infusion with a gauze or a sieve. Put the infusion on the hob once more. Add the sugar, trying to melt it fully. Bring to the boil. Leave the syrup to boil for a few minutes. Using a colander and a funnel, pour the syrup into dry bottles with an airtight top. The syrup is ready to use in a few days. It can be drunk with fresh water as a thirst-quenching and refreshing summer drink, or drunk pure and hot as a cure-all of wintertime ailments.





Regional Nature Park of Antola, blooming daffodils



# REGIONAL NATURE PARK PORTOFINO



## HOW TO GET THERE

### By car

A12 Genova – Livorno, toll booths of: Recco, Rapallo, Chiavari SS 1 Aurelia

### By train

Genova-La Spezia line, stations of: Camogli, Santa Margherita Ligure, Rapallo, Zoagli, Chiavari

### By bus

You can get to the municipalities of the Park by the bus services of Tigullio Trasporti S.p.A.

### By sea

Trasporti Marittimi Turistici Golfo Paradiso snc

<http://www.golfoparadiso.it/php/index.php?lang=eng>

Servizio Marittimo del Tigullio – Tigullio - Marine Lines

[www.traghettiportofino.it/en/](http://www.traghettiportofino.it/en/)

In addition, there are various boat services leaving from the port of Genoa (in the Expo-Genoa Aquarium area).

## LOCATION

Viale Rainusso, 1  
16038 Santa Margherita Ligure (GE)  
Tel. +39 0185 289479  
[info@parcoportofino.it](mailto:info@parcoportofino.it)  
<http://www.parcoportofino.com/parcodiportofino/en/homepage.page>



## SURFACE AREA

1056 hectares

## MUNICIPALITIES

Camogli, Portofino, Rapallo, Santa Margherita Ligure

The Park manages the **three Sites of Community Importance** (Park of Portofino, Rio Tuia-

Montallegro, Pineta-Lecceta delle Grazie)

The particular geomorphological and micro-climatic characteristics of the area have enabled, in an

extremely limited zone, the co-existence of extremely different types of vegetation: from the mesophile woods of the northern slopes to the Mediterranean brush of the southern slopes which host a **broad concentration of flora** (with an exceptionally

high density of a species by hectare), in addition to a remarkable variety of birds and invertebrates.

From a religious, historical, and architectural point of view, the land managed by the body encompasses a fascinating series of testimonies, above all related to the first human settlements in ancient times, the Castellaro di Camogli, the **Abbey of San Fruttuoso**, the thousand-year-old church of San Nicolò di Capodimonte, the Abbey of San Gerolamo, known as **Cervara**, and the numerous fortifications including Castello Brown in Portofino.

A network of over seventy kilometres of paths enables you to choose from walks and hikes of various length and difficulty, with the possibility to appreciate to the maximum the peculiar nature of the entire zone.

## RECOMMENDED ITINERARY

**Two days trekking from Camogli to Santa Margherita Ligure**

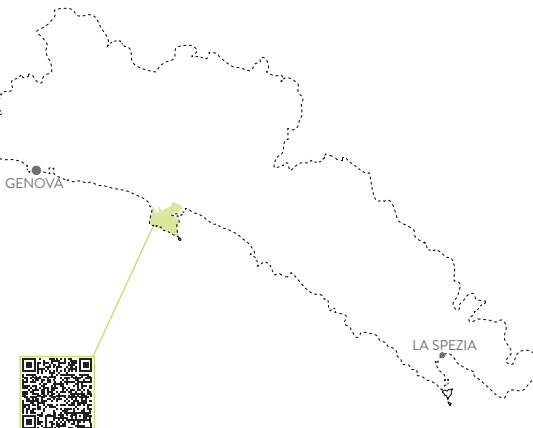
Day 1: Hike from **Camogli**, the famous Ligurian maritime village, as far as San Fruttuoso  
The route first reaches **San Rocco**, a suburb of Camogli “facing out onto” Golfo Paradiso and then continues on to the Batterie, military structures built during the Second World War to defend the Gulf of Genoa.

After a full immersion into history, the itinerary follows on as far as Toca and then continues, passing through the aromas of the



Mediterranean scrub and the wonderful views over Cala dell'Oro and the Tower, as far as Pietre Strette.  
Day 2: Hike from San Fruttuoso to **Santa**

**Margherita Ligure**  
Before leaving in the morning we recommend visiting the thousand-year-old abbey of San Fruttuoso, a monastery full of history and







## FOCACCIA WITH CHEESE

They say that this product was already around at the time of the third crusade. In ancient times the population of the coastal towns used to flee to the immediate hinterland to seek refuge from the raids by the Saracens. Legend has it that, thanks to the availability of oil, cheese, and flour, cooking the dough full of cheese on a covered slate, this gastronomic product that we now know as **Focaccia di Recco col Formaggio**

(focaccia with cheese from Recco) was "invented". **Focaccia di Recco col Formaggio** has now obtained the important recognition of the IGP (Protected Geographical Indication) European label of quality, and the production zone of the famous gastronomic speciality only includes the towns of Recco, Avegno, Camogli, and Sori. It is a simple and healthy product, with just a few ingredients, far from any type of sophistication, yet

traditions closely linked to the landscape surrounding it. The itinerary runs along the southern slope, first passing by Base O and then continuing to Mulino del Gassetta, an information point and museum space with an adjoining restaurant that prepares dishes from the local and regional cuisine. Here you can taste some typical dishes and, why not, take part in a cooking laboratory! In the afternoon, you continue on foot to Portofino or Santa Margherita Ligure (your choice).

difficult to replicate. Perhaps this is why the IGP recognition continues, thanks to the product's strong connection to the area, thanks to the manual and natural way in which the **focacciai** (focaccia makers) of the area stretch the sheets of dough, like veils; when you see them you wonder how they manage to handle them, with those big hands, without tearing them. Flour, fresh cheese, extra-virgin olive oil, water, and salt, in addition to the expertise of the master **focacciai**.

## PREBUGGIUN

This is a mixture of spontaneous herbs typical of Ligurian cooking, used in preparing the filling of pasta "delle feste di magro" (vegetarian). *Prebuggiun* is a term in Ligurian dialect that cannot be translated literally: it probably derives from the verb **preboggî** (in Ligurian dialect), which means to *pre-boil*, in a culinary sense, therefore a kind of "blanching". Among the plants used in the *prebuggiun*, we find numerous composites with yellow flowers such as *Sonchus oleraceus* (common sowthistle) and *Reichardia picroides* (French scorzonera), as well as *Borago officinalis* (borage), *Malva sylvestris* (common mallow), *Raphanus raphanistrum* (wild radish), *Sanguisorba minor* (salad burnet), and

FLAGSHIP Product

*Silene vulgaris* (bladder campion). Almost all the plants used in the *prebuggiun* are not fit to be eaten when fully grown: it is better to pick them when the plant is still young. Given the different organoleptic characteristics of each one, the complex compositional balance of the *prebuggiun* is linked to the search for a good balance in the flavours, considering that they all have a specific vegetation aroma: bitter (**radicion**), wild (**gè**), flavourful-neutral (**boraxe**), flavourful-sweet (**talegua**), and spicy. The most common use of the *prebuggiun* is as a filling for fresh pasta, an excellent base for vegetable minestrone or, simply boiled, used as a filling for ravioli, stuffed meatloaf or frittata.

## Pansoti in walnut sauce

### Ingredients

for the dough  
200 g of white flour  
1 egg  
water, as needed  
salt, as needed  
for the filling  
600 g of prebuggiun  
150 g of fresh ricotta  
100 g of grated Parmigiano Reggiano cheese  
1 egg  
extra-virgin olive oil  
nutmeg, as needed  
salt, as needed  
**for the walnut sauce**  
200 g of walnuts  
30 g of grated Parmigiano Reggiano cheese  
70 g of extra-virgin olive oil  
soft part of a loaf of bread dipped in milk  
1 clove of garlic



### Preparation

Boil the vegetables and drain them well. Chop them up roughly and mix them with the ricotta, egg, cheese, a pinch of nutmeg, a teaspoon of oil, and salt. Prepare the pasta and leave it to stand. Roll it out into a sheet that is not too thin and cut out squares 5 cm each side. Place a spoonful of the filling in the middle of each square, fold it into a triangle by joining the edges and turn them upwards to make a boat shape. After searing the walnuts and taking off the skin, using a mortar and pestle carefully crush them together with the garlic, cheese, oil, one teaspoon of lukewarm water and the soft part of the bread. Cook the pasta in salted water for 5 minutes. Serve hot with the walnut sauce on top.







Regional Nature Park of Portofino, Christ of the Abyss



Regional Nature Park of Portofino, Punta Chiappa

# MARINE PROTECTED AREA

## PORTOFINO\*



### LOCATION

Viale Rainusso, 1  
16038 S. Margherita  
Ligure (GE)  
Tel. +39 0185 289649  
info@portofinoamp.it  
www.portofinoamp.it



### SEA SURFACE AREA

346.00 ha

### MUNICIPALITIES

Camogli, Portofino,  
Santa Margherita Ligure

### HOW TO GET THERE

*By car*  
A12 Genova – Livorno, toll booths  
of: Recco, Rapallo, Chiavari  
SS 1 Aurelia

*By train*  
Genova-La Spezia line, stations of:  
Camogli, Santa Margherita Ligure,  
Rapallo, Zoagli, Chiavari

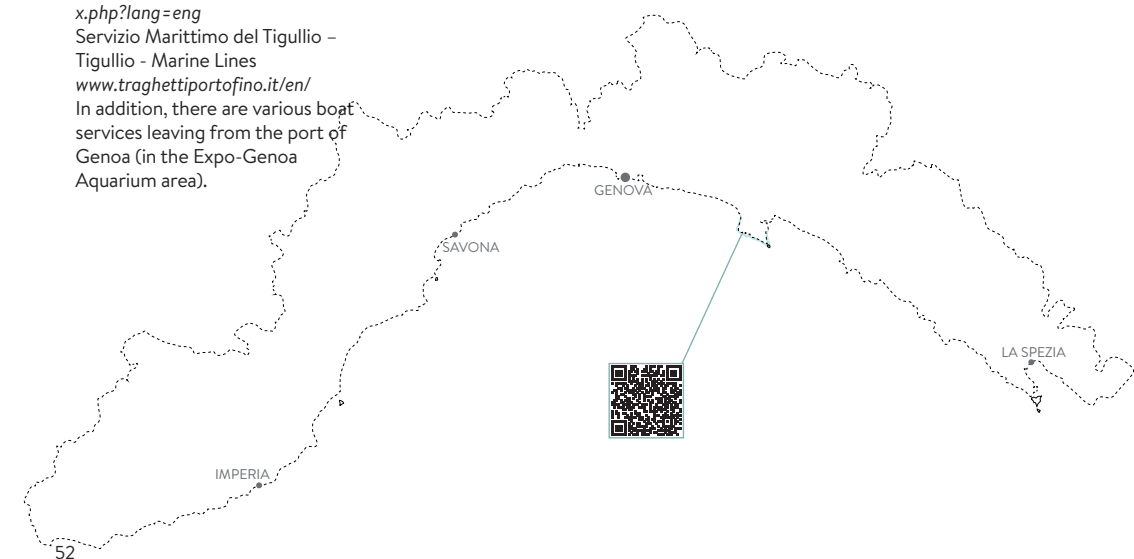
*By bus*  
You can get to the municipalities of  
the Park by the bus services of  
Tigullio Trasporti S.p.a.

*By sea*  
Trasporti Marittimi Turistici Golfo  
Paradiso snc  
<http://www.golfoparadiso.it/php/index.php?lang=eng>  
Servizio Marittimo del Tigullio –  
Tigullio - Marine Lines  
[www.traghettiportofino.it/en/](http://www.traghettiportofino.it/en/)  
In addition, there are various boat  
services leaving from the port of  
Genoa (in the Expo-Genoa  
Aquarium area).

The Marine  
Protected Area of  
Portofino extends  
around the  
**promontory** of the  
same name.

The coast appears in  
all its charm:  
evocative glimpses  
and small inlets with  
vegetation brushing

the sea.  
Along the southern  
front, there are  
**submerged cliffs**  
which rapidly drop  
down reaching  
great depths and  
creating a wealth  
of **micro-habitats**  
rarely found  
in the Mediterranean.



### THE TONNARELLA (TUNA FISHING TRAP) OF CAMOGLI

Used since 1600 the **tuna fishing trap of Camogli** is the last of a series of fixed tuna fishing traps along the coast around the promontory of Portofino. The term "tonnarella" derives from the fact that it is a system of fishing that is similar to the more widely known tuna fishing traps, though simpler and smaller: it features two chambers and a barrier net for catching "passing" fish. The net intercepts the fish who is then

guided into the two chambers. In the trap at Camogli the fish is not killed: the so-called "death chamber" is raised by the fishermen who then pick out the fish (**little tunny, frigate tuna, great amberjack, Atlantic bonito, and Atlantic horse mackerel**). As testimony to its environmental sustainability, the entire fishing plant is located within the Marine Protected Area and, since 2011, it has been protected by the Slow Food Movement.



### GALLETTE DEL MARINAIO (SAILOR'S CRACKERS)

The galletta is a **thin focaccia** that is dry and compact, perfect for minestra, soups, and **capponadda** (seafood salad).

Dry and crumbly (its base ingredients are water, flour, and salt), you can happily munch on some at any time of the day.

They are made by the **bakers of Camogli** who use a traditional recipe following

an ancient method. The gallette were used by **sailors and fishermen** who would bring them with them on their long voyages out to sea; indeed, their distinctive feature is that they keep for a long time.



### Capponadda alla ligure

#### Ingredients

2/3 gallette del marinaio  
80/100 g of tuna in oil  
1 boiled egg  
1 ripe tomato  
taggiasca olives  
2/3 fillets of salted anchovies  
1 teaspoon of white wine vinegar  
capers  
onion  
oregano  
parsley  
extra-virgin olive oil from Riviera Ligure  
salt, as needed



#### Preparation

Break up the gallette and dampen them with water and some vinegar so that they take on a consistency halfway between spongy and crunchy. Place the gallette in a ceramic container and add the tomato chopped up into pieces, the onion sliced up, the anchovies with the bones taken out and cut into small pieces, the tuna crumbled up, the capers, and the olives. Mix it all together and dress with the extra-virgin olive oil, adjust the salt, and add the oregano. Place it all on a plate and garnish with the boiled egg cut up as you wish.



# REGIONAL NATURE PARK

## AVETO



### HOW TO GET THERE

#### By car

A12 Genova – Livorno (exit at Chiavari or Lavagna)  
Main roads: S.P. 586 of Val d'Aveto; S.P. 26 of Val Graveglia; S.P. 26 bis of Passo del Bocco; S.P. 654 of Val di Nure; S.P. 56 of Barbagelata; S.P. 23 of Scogliana

#### By train

Genova – Pisa line (Chiavari or Lavagna train stations)

#### By bus

Tigullio public transport (freephone number 800014808 – +39 185 3731);  
Public Transport Company of Parma and its Province (TEP) (freephone number 800977966 – Tel. +39 0521 2141)

The notable **wealth of flora and fauna** together with a variety of rocks and minerals that are unique in Liguria, make the Park of Aveto a fascinating destination, unmissable for nature lovers, and also for those who want to come into contact with somewhere made to fit man and nature, different to the frenetic city life.

### LOCATION

Via Marrè, 75/A  
– 16041 Borzonasca (GE)  
Tel. +39 0185 340311  
**Visitor Centre in the Aveto Valley**  
Via Roma, 47 – 16048 Rezzoaglio (GE)  
Tel. +39 0185 870171  
The following can be found at the offices:  
**Environmental Education Centre**  
([cea.aveto@parcoaveto.it](mailto:cea.aveto@parcoaveto.it)) –  
**Information Point – Environmental hiking accompaniment service – Thematic library**  
Tel. +39 0185 343370  
[info@parcoaveto.it](mailto:info@parcoaveto.it)  
[www.parcoaveto.it](http://www.parcoaveto.it)



### SURFACE AREA

3018 hectares

### MUNICIPALITIES

Borzonasca, Mezzanego, Ne, Rezzoaglio, Santo Stefano d'Aveto

In the space of just a few kilometres, the Park displays a landscape that is varied both due to its natural aspects and its agricultural and forest features, with a stretch of marine environment with olive groves, vineyards, and vegetable gardens. This is followed by the area of the chestnuts, the mountainous stretch characterised by meadows,

old beech forests, and rocky peaks that are almost inaccessible. The Park's **hiking patrimony** is comprised of a dense network of paths that are well signposted and can be followed on foot, horseback, or mountain bikes (and in winter with snowshoes or skis). By following these paths you can cross the entire Park, discovering its most evocative corners. But the Park is not only about nature: we can discover the ancient work of man comprising amazing rural villages, religious buildings that testify an ancient work of evangelising or the devotion of the mountain dwellers, terraced strips, ice-houses, and “barchi” (traditional hay barracks, with a movable roof). There are **numerous typical products** which qualify the area from a gastronomic point of view and transform a journey to the Park into an extraordinary route “from nature to the table”, discovering all those typical products, harvested, selected, or handed down by the mountain dwellers through the generations, which the Park of Aveto still conserves and offers, and which identify it as a **Park “for all tastes”**.

The rural hospitality of the Park offers a vast choice of agritourisms, B&B, holiday homes, hotels, alpine huts and shelters, in addition to the new **Ospitalità Diffusa** accommodation network ([www.unamontagnadiaccoglienza.it](http://www.unamontagnadiaccoglienza.it)).

### RECOMMENDED ITINERARY

#### The pastures and cheese route

The Park of Aveto hosts numerous sheep and **goat and cattle breeders**, which have been present in these Apennines for centuries and still apply basically the same methods today as in the past. Especially on the southern slopes of the massive **Mount Aiona**, in Valle Sturla, we find the **last alpine huts** for cattle grazing, which still have a rational and integral management system that is extremely ancient and the only one of its kind in the region. Meanwhile, in the nearby pastures and also in the **Graveglia Valley** there are still sheep and **goat herds**, which are heirs of a thousand-year-old breeding practice of the Mediterranean mountains.

Goat's milk is excellent for making **pure cheeses** (caprini), as **tomini** or **formaggette**, to be eaten fresh or mature. The high pastures on the mountains of the Aveto Valley enable, above all, the breeding of cattle with summer grazing and winter spent in the stable, thanks to the local production of hay. There is the hugely prestigious presence of a local rustic breed that has been selected for centuries, **mucca cabannina**, at risk of extinction, and now also protected by the Slow Food Movement. This breed provides milk that is rich in the aromas of the fodder of the valley's pastures. The milk is used to make cheese: **San Stè** and **U Cabanin**, with the latter made solely with *Cabannina milk*. We must not forget the quagliata, the excellent ricotte, and *Sarassu*, a type of



ricotta made with matured whey that is truly flavoursome. To taste these cheeses, you can follow a route by car which starts from Perlezzi in the Sturla Valley, where you can try the caprini at the “U Pastine” agricultural enterprise, and then go back up the entire valley towards the pass of Forcella and following on through the Aveto Valley, stopping off at the “Petramartina” agricultural enterprise in Scabbiamara, or at Mileto or Parazzuolo, where you can find other family-run dairies which produce *cabannina* cheese. In the main town of Rezzoaglio you will also find the **Park’s Visitors Centre** and a visit to the



“Val d’Aveto” dairy just cannot be missed. In Santo Stefano d’Aveto you can visit and purchase products at the same family-run dairies that produce the famous cheese of Santo Stefano d’Aveto.

For visits or purchases contact the above-mentioned enterprises in advance. Contact details and telephone numbers are available on the website <http://www.parcoaveto.it/Eprodotti.php>



## THE FOREST SUPPLY CHAIN AND THE FORESTRY ECO-MUSEUM

The area of the Park of Aveto has a high level of forest coverage, one of the highest in Italy. The forests are containers of biodiversity. For the purposes of sustainable management, the Park

has privileged the short supply chain: the materials gathered from the selection cutting of conifers aiming deciduous high forest structure are used for works or furniture (such as the “ecological” furniture for the Park’s shelters) and top class craftsmanship

(including the famous “chair of Chiavari”), while the scraps are virtuously used as combustible biomass. With the aim of conserving and displaying the ancient and recent testimonies of the local uses of the forest’s resources, the Park set up a Forestry Museum at *Lago delle Lame*.

## PATATA QUARANTINA (RAPIDLY DEVELOPING POTATOES)

Between the 19th and 20th centuries, potatoes helped in resolving the problems of hunger that cyclically hit the rural world, along with the chestnuts from these valleys. Nowadays, they are a vital side dish on our tables and a basic ingredient for the area’s cuisine, with traditional recipes unearthed by the more attentive restaurants. The cultivation of certain varieties typical of the local Apennines ensures the typical nature of the dish and adds an organoleptic value to the cuisine of the Park of Aveto. The *patata quarantina* is the top variety of potato in Liguria and is considered the most famous, the oldest, and the tastiest among the local varieties. It is produced in the entire area of the Genoese hinterland: the potato has a round to round-oval shape, the skin is smooth and yellow, and the inside is white. It is a semi-early variety (and the term “quarantina” or “rapidly developing” probably underlines its early harvesting), and its conservation qualities are average. The yield is also

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average, but decreases in heavy lands or humid areas. The white *patata quarantina* is suited for all usages in cooking. It is traditionally used in dishes such as focaccia and cakes, gnocchi, and “prebugiun”, the farmer’s single-course meal based on potatoes and lacinato kale, and “baciocca”, a delicious quiche. For some years now the Park of Aveto has been collaborating with the “Quarantina Consortium” (an association which promotes family-run agriculture and the rural revival of the Genoese mountains – [www.quarantina.it](http://www.quarantina.it)) to set up the exhibition **Patate dal Mondo**, an exposition of approximately three hundred different varieties of potato from many countries, which is held every year during the last week of September at the **Park’s Visitors Centre** at Rezzoaglio. With the support of the Park, the Consortium also organised a conservation field at a local agricultural enterprise for the reproduction of the varieties on exhibit coming from all over the world. This is the only field of its kind in Italy and can be visited during the summer period (Tel. +39 0185 343370).



## Baciocca

This is a quiche whose flavour is enriched by cooking it under a *testo* (a traditional cooking plate), traditionally over a layer of chestnut leaves.



### Ingredients

1 kg of *patate quarantine*  
2 onions  
Parmigiano Reggiano cheese, as needed  
1 slice of lard  
milk, flour  
extra-virgin olive oil  
salt, as needed  
pepper, as needed

### Preparation

Slice the potatoes thinly and place them in a colander with salt for around 15 minutes. Slice the onions finely and place them in a bowl with water and table salt. Mince the lard. Rinse the onions, drain them, and fry in some oil on a low heat. Turn off the heat and add the minced lard. In a bowl add the onions and lard to the potatoes and flavour with the grated Parmigiano Reggiano, some flour and milk, and mix it all together well. Place a sheet of dough made with flour and water on a wooden platter and place the mixture on top. Heat the *testo* in a wood-burning oven for approximately 20-30 minutes. Carefully slide the dough from the platter onto the chestnut leaves, cover with the *testo*, and cook for roughly 30 minutes. There is also a “vegetarian” version without lard which is just as tasty.





Regional Nature Park of Aveto



# NATIONAL PARK CINQUE TERRE



## HOW TO GET THERE

### By car

From the A12 motorway, in the Genova – La Spezia section, you can exit at the toll booth of Carrodano to reach Levanto and then Monterosso, Vernazza, and Corniglia. In the same way, by exiting at the toll booth of Brugnato, you can reach Monterosso, Vernazza, and Corniglia.

Coming from La Spezia, you can take the Litoranea coastal road and then easily reach Riomaggiore and Manarola. A narrow, tortuous road, known as “strada dei Santuari”, connects the five villages.

### By train

The trains are particularly frequent, especially during the summer, and the local trains stop at all the stations of the Cinque Terre: Riomaggiore, Manarola, Corniglia, Vernazza, and Monterosso al Mare. The end of the line is La Spezia, on the Pisa-Genova line, where all the long-distance trains stop.

### By sea

In spring and summer there are daily services by sea to La Spezia, Lerici, and Porto Venere. Monterosso, Vernazza, Manarola, and Riomaggiore are also serviced, during the day, by internal navigation lines, with Monterosso as the last stop.

<http://www.navigazionegolfoeipoeti.it/home.asp?lang=eng>

The National Park of Cinque Terre, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is a naturalistic oasis, which over time has maintained intact its characteristics of uncontaminated nature.

The landscape, formed of rocks with different origins and ages, is distinguished by the particular gradient and the lack of flat sections. The **high and jagged coast** is linear, with very little inlets and promontories, carved out by the sea in pleasant and suggestive caves. The few beaches, both with sand and pebbles, are the result of the debris left by the waterways, landslides, or accumulations of

## LOCATION

Via Discovolo snc  
c/o Stazione Manarola, 25  
19017 Riomaggiore (SP)  
Tel. +39 0187 762600  
[info@parconazionale5terre.it](mailto:info@parconazionale5terre.it)  
[http://www.parconazionale5terre.it/?id\\_lingue=2](http://www.parconazionale5terre.it/?id_lingue=2)



## SURFACE AREA

3854 hectares

## MUNICIPALITIES

Levanto, Monterosso, Riomaggiore, Vernazza, La Spezia

materials left by man. The National Park of Cinque Terre is naturally also a great habitat for **various species of fauna** who find the perfect conditions here to live and reproduce.



## RECOMMENDED ITINERARY

### Sciacchettrail

The name *Sciacchettrail* is the combination of the words *Sciacchetrà* and *Trail*: the dessert wine produced here and a walk through nature.

**Sciacchettrail** is a trail challenge which unites the communities and it exalts the area and the hard work required in the cultivation of the land. It is held every year in spring.

Beautiful and in some sections still unexplored, the trail route is not for everyone, both due to the technical aspects: a circuit that starts and ends at **Monterosso al Mare**, uniting the five villages and respective sanctuaries via 47 km of dirt tracks climbing more than 3000 m; and also because the organisers, the Park of Cinque Terre







and the Local Tourism System, decided to only make 200 bibs available to avoid creating too much pressure. For all those who will not be able to take part in the first edition, there will be the opportunity to travel

along the competition route at any time of the year, as special signposts will be installed. **Sciacchettrail** is the event chosen by the Park to inaugurate the new vertical signposting system which will distinguish the entire

network of paths in Cinque Terre. Sciacchettrail is not only a competition, but is also a big festival dedicated to the wine-makers of Cinque Terre and their extraordinary work to protect the **terraced landscape**.



### SCIACCHETRÀ

Sciacchetrà is a **dessert wine, sweet and smooth**, produced in the Cinque Terre area from the grapes of the *Bosco*, *Albarola*, and *Vermentino* vines. While the origin of the name is enveloped in mystery - some say it derives from the Semitic term *shekar* which was used in Palestine 3,000 years ago to define fermented drinks, whereas others claim it comes from the verb in local dialect *sciaccà*, or “to squash”, used in this case to indicate the squashing of the grapes - it is certain

that the prestigious wine has become the emblem par excellence of Cinque Terre. It has a **fruity, floral aroma**, which recalls the essences of the Mediterranean scrub: tones of dried fruits, apricot jam, yellow peach, vanilla, chestnut honey, and spices. Its colour is warm and intense: from golden yellow to amber, tending towards topaz. It has a sweet flavour that is never sickening, warm, with a good body, velvety and suave, well-balanced, and with a pleasant and very light tannic quality. With an average yield of 25 l by q of grapes – they are left to dry out in the sun until November and are then sorted by hand to select only the best – and an extremely high quality guaranteed by its DOC label (DOC since 1973 like the dry type), *Sciacchetrà* is a niche product that can develop for ten, twenty, and even thirty years.

FLAGSHIP  
Product

### Farinata (chickpea pancake)

#### Ingredients

1 l of water  
between 350 and 450 g of chickpea flour  
50 g of wheat flour  
10 g of salt  
extra-virgin olive oil  
pepper, to taste



#### Preparation

Mix the two flours together and dilute with salted water. Leave to stand for at least three hours at room temperature.

Remove the foam formed on the surface with a ladle. Bring the mixture to the right density by adding more salted water and then add around half a glass of oil.

In the meantime heat the oven at 220°C at least. Grease a pan (possibly in tinned copper) with plenty of oil, then pour in the liquid already mixed, checking that the oil has mixed in evenly.

Bake for approximately 15-20 minutes.

When cooked turn on the grill to make the surface turn golden.

Take care that the pan is always perfectly flat, otherwise the farinata will be thicker on one side and thinner on the other. And in order to avoid uneven cooking, you also have to rotate the pan gradually as the surface is turning golden.

When you take it out of the oven, sprinkle with a little ground pepper to taste.





# MARINE PROTECTED AREA

## CINQUE TERRE



### HOW TO GET THERE

#### By car

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#### By sea

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<http://www.navigazionegolfoeipoeti.it/home.asp?lang=eng>

Bordered to the west by **Punta Mesco** and to the east by **Punta Pineda** just beyond Capo Montenero, the marine reserve of Cinque Terre almost forms a gulf, closed at the land side by a coast plummeting into the sea.

At Punta Mesco and **Capo Montenero**, the rocky coast sinks down to 30 m in depth and along these cliffs you can admire really diverse and colourful underwater environments and, unusually for the Mediterranean, even at just 15/20 m in depth you can see magnificent fans of *Paramuricea clavata* and other sciophyte species that usually live at greater depths.

At Punta Mesco the rocky wall falls steeply, almost vertically, down below the surface of the sea for around 20 m where we find the sea bed characterised by scattered

### LOCATION

Via Discovolo sns  
c/o Stazione Manarola, 26  
19017 Riomaggiore (SP)  
Tel. +39 0187 762600  
[info@parconazionale5terre.it](mailto:info@parconazionale5terre.it)  
[www.parconazionale5terre.it/area-marina-protetta-cinque-terre.asp?id\\_lingue](http://www.parconazionale5terre.it/area-marina-protetta-cinque-terre.asp?id_lingue)

### SEA SURFACE AREA

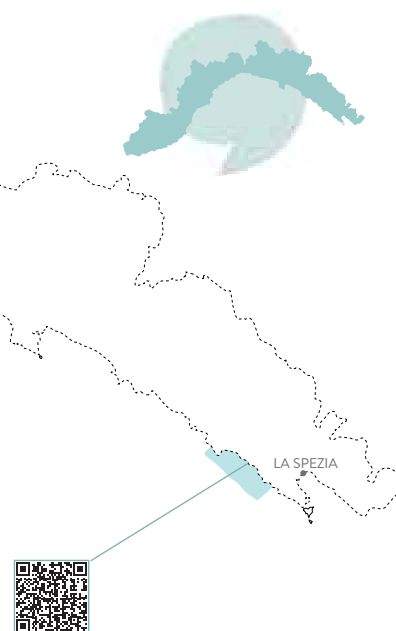
4591 hectares

### MUNICIPALITIES

Levanto, Monterosso al Mare, Riomaggiore, Vernazza



rocks covered in colonies of **yellow cluster anemone** (*Parazoanthus axinellae*) and colonies of *Paramuricea clavata* which, at greater depths, have a mixed red and yellow colour. At 40 metres below sea



level, the sea floor becomes mixed: the muddy area, probably due to the larger amount of fine sediment, is populated by colonies of *Leptogorgia sarmentosa*, while the rocky sections are covered in *Paramuricea clavata*. In this area you can often find the **broad sea fan** (*Eunicella verrucosa*) which is not very common in the Mediterranean. Capo Montenero mainly hosts populations of hard sublayers, including formations of coral with sea fans of yellow-orange *Leptogorgia sarmentosa* with wide branches of up to 40 cm. The sea of Cinque Terre is included in the International area called the “**Sea Cetacean Sanctuary**” including the Tuscan coast, northern

### THE SALTED ANCHOVIES OF MONTEROSSO

A traditional dish of Cinque Terre, the anchovies are processed according to the ancient recipe of



Sardinia, and the French coast near Toulon. For this reason, in certain periods of the year, the waters off the Protected Marine Area of Cinque Terre are crossed by numerous fin whales, bottlenose dolphins, and groups of common dolphins.

The Protected Marine Area plays a vital role in managing the coastal environment and, even though the Protected Marine Area of Cinque Terre was only set up recently, some positive effects can already be seen, especially with regard to the species of non-migratory and quality fish, such as the increase in numbers and size of brown meagre (*Sciaena umbra*) and dusky grouper (*Epinephelus marginatus*).

**Monterosso al Mare.** Known as *pan du ma*, the anchovies are fished using the traditional method of light attractors and with *cianciolo* nets and are processed by hand over two to three days. The careful placing of the fish in layers, suitable pressing, and accurate monitoring of the quantity and quality of the brine make the **anchovies firm and tasty**, also guaranteeing their perfect conservation. The product maintains all the aroma and flavour of the fish when it was freshly caught. We recommend trying it with oil, oregano, and garlic for an exceptional appetizer, but it is also excellent as a second course.

## Anchovies marinated in lemon

### Ingredients

fresh anchovies  
1 clove of garlic  
the juice of one lemon  
extra-virgin olive oil  
1 bunch of parsley, chopped  
oregano, as needed  
salt, as needed  
pepper, as needed



### Preparation

Clean the anchovies, also taking out the bones, and open them like a book. Place them on a tray with high edges and place under running water (not too strong) for around half an hour.

The fish will turn a lighter colour, while remaining compact.

Dry them and place them on another tray, basting them with a few drops of lemon.

Place them in a cool place for roughly an hour.

Drain them, if necessary, and lay them out on a serving tray.

Sprinkle them with parsley and oregano and add salt and pepper to taste.

Finally, drizzle with some extra-virgin olive oil.



# REGIONAL AND MARINE PROTECTED AREA **PORTO VENERE**



## LOCATION

Municipality of Porto Venere  
Via Garibaldi, 9  
19025 Porto Venere (SP)  
Tel. +39 0187 794823  
[ufficioparco@parconaturaleportovenere.it](mailto:ufficioparco@parconaturaleportovenere.it)  
[http://www.parconaturaleportovenere.it/?id\\_lingue=2&id\\_prodotto=&id\\_galleria=&itolo\\_galleria=](http://www.parconaturaleportovenere.it/?id_lingue=2&id_prodotto=&id_galleria=&itolo_galleria=)



## SURFACE AREA

274 hectares in the Nature Park and 132 hectares in the Marine Protected Area of the Regional Nature Park of Porto Venere

## MUNICIPALITY

Porto Venere

## HOW TO GET THERE

### By car

A12 motorway Genova-Livorno  
A15 motorway La Spezia-Parma  
Exit at La Spezia, and then take the provincial road to Porto Venere (15 km)

### By train

Services from Genoa, Parma, and Pisa:  
La Spezia Centrale station  
then A.T.C. bus, line 11/P to Porto Venere

Freephone number 800

<http://www.atcesercizio.it/index.php/en/>

### By bus

From the car park in Cavo there is a shuttle service as follows:

– in the months of March, April, May, June, and September  
Saturday from 2:00 pm to 8:00 pm  
Sunday and public holidays from 10:00 am to 8:00 pm

– in the months of July and August  
every day from 10:00 am to 8:00 pm  
Saturday, Sunday and public holidays from 10:00 am to midnight  
(bus every 15 minutes)

### By sea

La Spezia, Lerici, Cinque Terre, Tigullio, Versilia

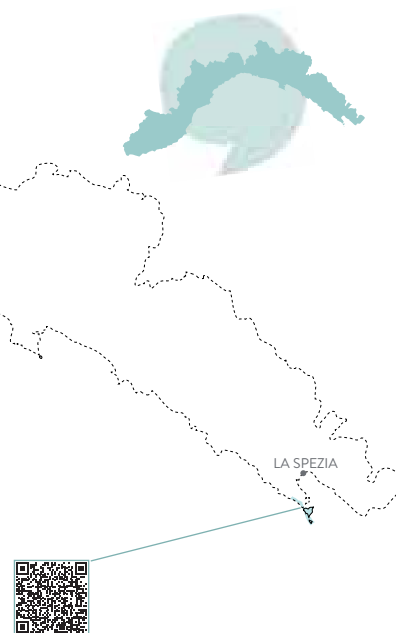
Tel. +39 0187 732987

<http://www.navigazionegolfodeipoeti.it/home.asp?lang=eng>

Trasporto Pubblico Isola Palmaria  
(Public Transportation Palmaria Island)  
Consorzio Barcaioli Porto Venere Service  
Tel. +39 347 8024817

The Regional Nature Park of Porto Venere offers a unique landscape with its **high coasts, caves**, and vegetation which in all seasons permeates the environment with mutating tones of colour. The element behind every detail, harmonising everything, is the sea. At times it is calm and crystal clear, reflecting, like an enchanted mirror, the multi-coloured rocks and flying seagulls; and sometimes it is rough and almost angry, roaring and shattering against the rock with the **church of San Pietro** located at the top. The Park is crowned by the archipelago with the **three islands, Palmaria, Tino, and Tinetto**, which challenge the blue sea in a turbine of aromas and gazes towards infinity. But the Park is not just

nature, history has also been present here since prehistoric times, with the **Grotta dei Colombi cave**, up to the recent past when Marconi used to experiment his innovative studies in front of the village. It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.



## MUSSELS AND OYSTERS

Visitors are always curious of the pole-like structures which can be glimpsed here and there in the stretch of sea that extends towards the overlooking island of Palmaria. These are the “**sea vines**” which for over a century have been supporting the **nurseries of mussels** and, for the past few years, of **oysters** as well. Mussels are bivalve molluscs that belong to the *Heterodonta* group and those bred in Porto Venere belong to the species *mytilus galloprovincialis*. The first oyster nursery dates to 1890, when the biologist Carrazzi, together with Emanuele Albano from Taranto, began

to place bundles of mastic tree on the sea bed in the gulf in order to catch the larvae of the passing *Ostrea edulis*, thus creating oyster-breeding, which developed in parallel with mussel-breeding at least until halfway through the last century, when oysters suffered the crushing supremacy of the numbers achieved in mussel-breeding. Recently attention has been placed on oysters once more, with the intention of giving mussel-breeders the chance to branch out with another product, i.e. oysters.

FLAGSHIP  
Product

## Stuffed mussels

### Ingredients for 6 people

50 large mussels  
2 Kg small mussels  
4 eggs  
1 soaked bread roll  
100 g of Parmigiano Reggiano cheese  
200 g of minced mortadella  
80 g tuna  
garlic  
parsley  
marjoram  
extra-virgin olive oil  
dry white wine  
tomatoes skinned and pureed  
salt, as needed  
pepper, as needed



### Preparation

Meticulously clean the mussels to be stuffed. Open them raw with a knife, break the “nerve”, and leave them to drain in a container. Open the small mussels with steam: half will be used in the filling and the other half will go into the sauce. Prepare the filling by adding the bread, mortadella, tuna, minced mussels, the Parmigiano Reggiano, and the herbs to the eggs. Fill the mussels, closing them and taking care not to break the valves. Prepare the sauce in a large, low pan, by frying in the extra-virgin olive oil the ground garlic and parsley with the remaining mussels chopped up roughly. Add some wine, and then the tomatoes and half a glass of the water released from the mussels opened raw. Do not add salt. Carefully lay down the stuffed mussels into the pan, taking care that they do not open, and leave them to cook on a low heat for approximately half an hour and, in any case, until the sauce is reduced.

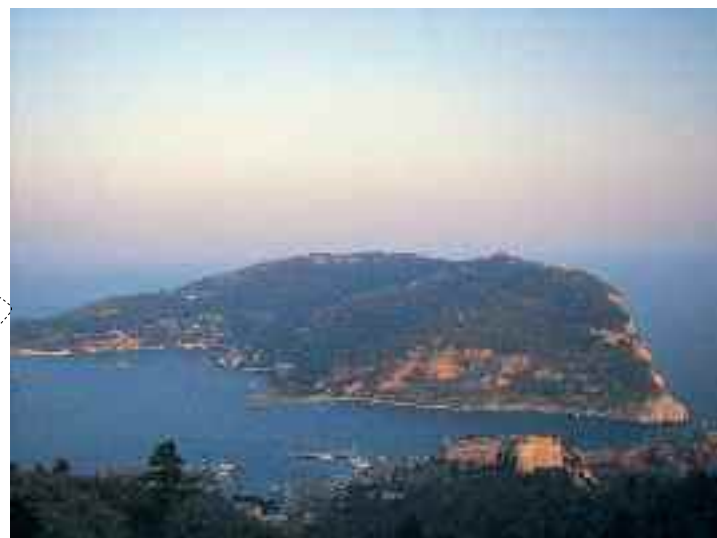
## RECOMMENDED ITINERARY

### Circumnavigation of the island of Palmaria

From Terrizzo, which you can get to via the **public boat service from Porto Venere and La Spezia**, you can access the route that weaves along the **island of Palmaria**. The route includes sections of path with various levels of difficulty, going uphill and

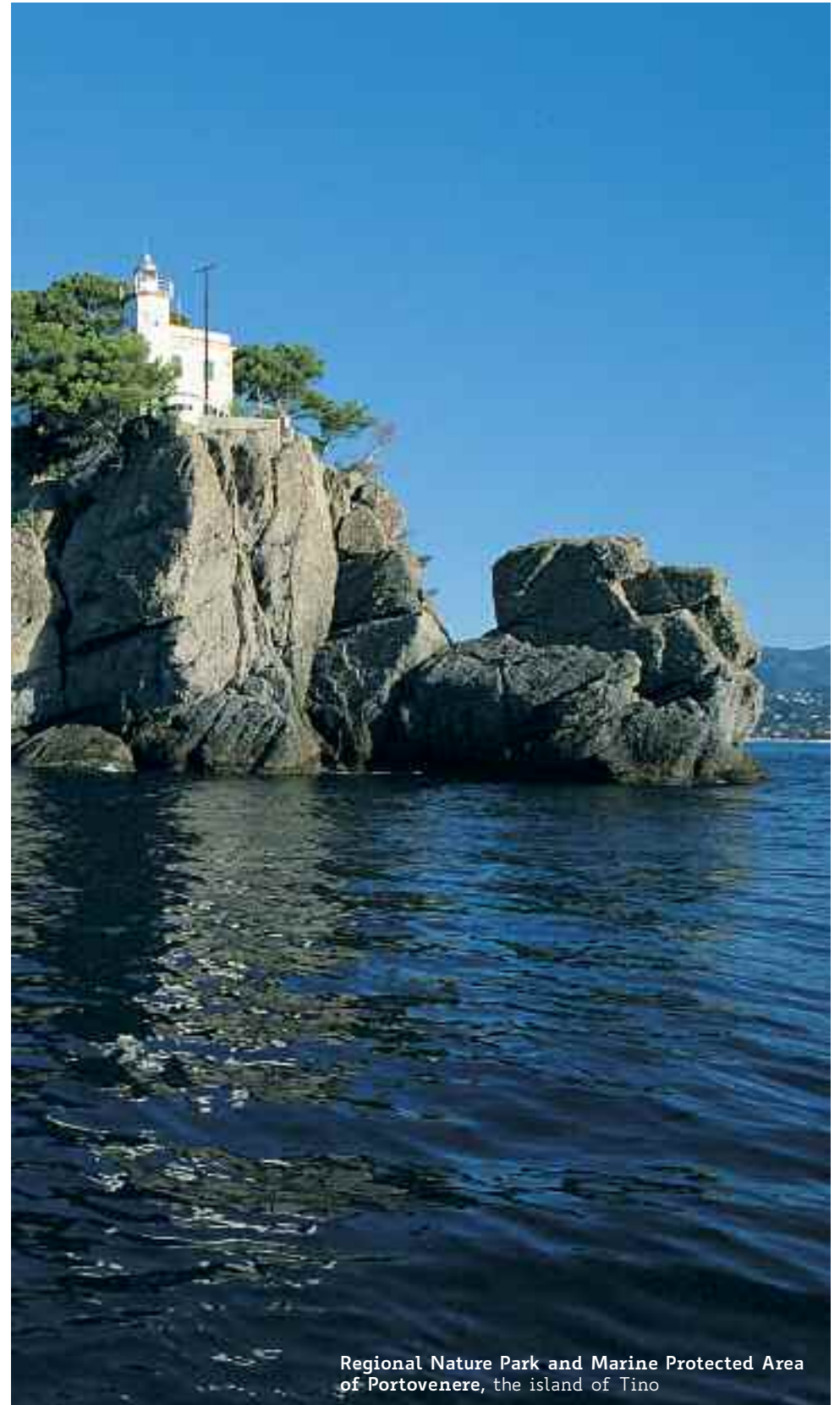
downhill, with a total height difference of 198 metres, to be tackled with the right equipment.

The path starts on a dirt track which softly ascends to altitude, running along the part of the island facing the Gulf of La Spezia and which enables you to see the **Fortress Umberto I**, the **Scola Tower**, and the numerous small beaches of **Cala della Fornace**.





Regional Nature Park and Marine Protected Area  
of Portovenere, the church of San Pietro



Regional Nature Park and Marine Protected Area  
of Portovenere, the island of Tino



# REGIONAL NATURE PARK MONTEMARCELLO-MAGRA-VARA



## HOW TO GET THERE

### By car

A12 motorway Genova – Livorno (toll booths at Carrodano, Brugnato, Santo Stefano Magra, and Sarzana) Parma – La Spezia motorway (toll booths at Santo Stefano Magra, and Sarzana) SS1 Aurelia; SS62 della Cisa

### By train

Pisa - Genova line, Sarzana and La Spezia stations; Parma – La Spezia line, Santo Stefano Magra station

### By bus

ATC LA Spezia

### By sea

Lerici tourist port, dock along the River Magra  
Ferries from La Spezia to Lerici

The river area includes the stretch of the **River Magra** which runs through Liguria and comes out along the **River Vara**, its main tributary, as far as the **bridge of Santa Margherita**. Following the two rivers, the protected area forms a stretch which, even though it reaches 1000 m wide in some parts, is generally rather narrow. The hilly area is found in the section of the Park where the **promontory of Caprione** is which, from **Arcola**, continues towards the sea as far as **Punta Bianca** with rugged and rocky forms: on one side the **Gulf of La Spezia** and the open sea, on the other the **mouth of the River Magra**, the plain of Luni and the Apuan Alps permanently veined with white. The Vara Valley is characterised by hills with woods of century-old chestnut trees, olive

## LOCATION

Via Paci, 2  
19038 Sarzana (SP)  
Tel. +39 0187 691071  
[info@parcomagra.it](mailto:info@parcomagra.it)  
<http://parco.parcomagra.it/index.php>



## SURFACE AREA

3932 hectares, of which 1206 hectares “Adjoining Special Area”

## MUNICIPALITIES

Ameilia, Arcola, Beverino, Bolano, Borghetto Vara, Brugnato, Calice al Cornoviglio, Carro, Carrodano, Follo, Lerici, Pignone, Riccò del Golfo di Spezia, Rocchetta Vara, Santo Stefano Magra, Sarzana, Sesta Godano, Vezzano

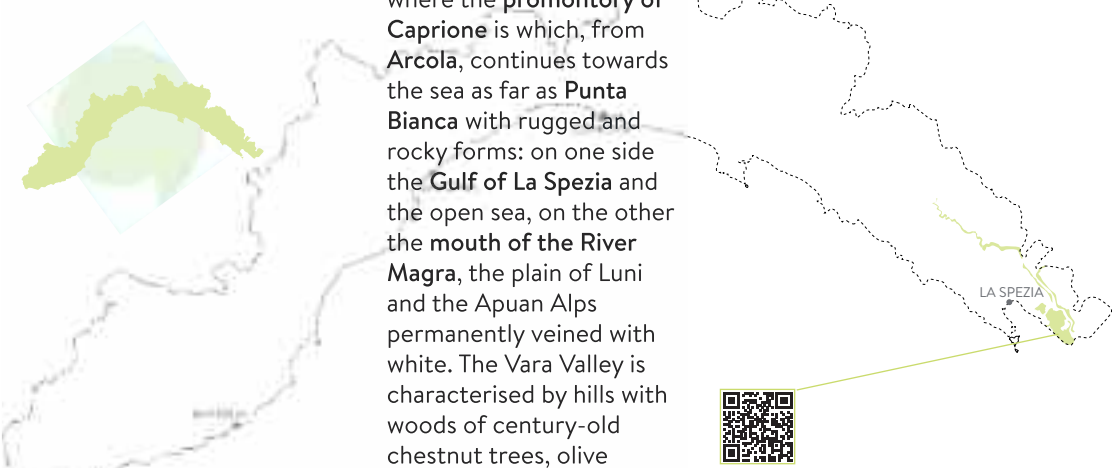
groves, hamlets of great historical and naturalistic interest, rocks and karst areas, with caves and sinkholes. The River Vara dominates and designs the valley, wedged in between rocky meanders and widening in small farmed plains. In this enchanted place, there are many agritourism and agricultural enterprises, where you can taste dishes from the local tradition and



rural culture. The Vara Valley is crossed over by many paths which enable you to discover uncontaminated environments. One of these paths starts from the 16th century hamlet **Suvero**, a suburb of Rocchetta Vara, dominated by a **castle** which was a defensive structure and then a residence of the Malaspina family. In front of the castle, lies the **church of San Giovanni Battista** which conserves the low-relief in white marble called *The Virgin with the Child surrounded by Angels playing Music* dating to the end of the 15th century. Continuing towards the **Casoni pass**, which towers over 1000 metres above sea level, just

outside the hamlet along the SP6, you enter into an imposing pine forest, considered one of the most beautiful of the Ligurian Apennines, with timber trees extending for various hectares. The green, almost emerald, wood of conifers stands out strongly against

the grassy Apennine slopes, creating a suggestive contrast. The pine forest is linked to **Alta Via dei Monti Liguri** by various paths and mule tracks (the old Vie del Sale - salt routes) suited for walks through the green countryside or for trekking or mountain biking.







### RECOMMENDED ITINERARY From the mouth of the River Magra to Lerici

This magnificent crossing, one of the classic examples of the promontory of Caprione, links the village located at the mouth of the River Magra to the splendid hamlet of Lerici. Along the route, you come across the historic centre Montemarcello, the **Park's Botanical Garden**, and the two abandoned passes at Portesone and Barbazzano. Worth noting are the ancient "cavanei", constructions in dry stone which recall the Sardinian megalithic towers "nuraghe", whose function is not clear. Indicated by the signpost no. 3 and Alta Via del Golfo (AVG), the path starts and finishes at

**Bocca di Magra.** From the car park you climb up towards the monastery of **Santa Croce del Corvo** (1176) whose ancient chapel conserves the Holy Cross. Past this monastery, you follow a mule track until the tarmacked road where you reach the path which weaves towards the village of Montemarcello, crossing through Mediterranean scrub in some sections, with numerous aromatic essences and spectacular blossomings (broom, orchids, cistus, strawberry trees, euphorbia, thyme, helichrysum, rosemary, etc.), then the evergreen oaks and abandoned cultivations. The village streets, which cross at right angles, still today recall

its past as a Roman camp, while traces of the wall are still visible running along Via delle Mura as far as the old gate. From Montemarcello you can enjoy a wonderful panorama of Golf of Poets and its islands. From the hamlet, you continue along path no. 433 which runs halfway along the coast, crossing through Mediterranean scrub, with numerous aromatic essences, until it reaches **Zanego**, from which you descend towards Tellaro. Following along path no. 3 toward Lerici, you come to the ruins of the hamlet **Portesone**. Lying 138 metres above sea level, this ancient agricultural and pastoral village has a few dilapidated houses suffocated by the dense vegetation. In the 16th century, the plague seriously hit the inhabitants of this hamlet and the survivors fled to **Barbazzano**, another abandoned village that you can reach by following the path that continues on flat ground at 115 metres above sea level. This hamlet was owned by the bishop of Luni and the small two-storey houses can still be seen. They are now used as shelter for small livestock or to store farming equipment. The church and defensive walls with the guard tower have disappeared over time. The plague led to the abandonment of the village and the foundation of Tellaro and Fiascherino.

the 1980s. The environment played an important role in the development of beekeeping in Calice. Indeed this is an uncontaminated land that is perfect for producing high quality and perfectly biological honey. There are many

botanical varieties and their blossomings are well staggered over the season, enabling a very diverse harvest. In this way, at least six types of honey are produced, with different colours, flavours, and organoleptic characteristics.

### EXTRA-VIRGIN OLIVE OIL OF RIVIERA DI LEVANTE

The Park of Montemarcello-Magra-Vara still today conserves vast **terraced areas** where people still practice the **traditional manual harvesting of olives**. Together with the fact that oil is only extracted with mechanical and physical processes, this creates top quality oil that maintains the unique original characteristics of the fruit. Thanks to the conservation and development of traditional olive cultivation, the Park has

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managed to conserve a unique habitat, extraordinarily rich in biodiversity that would otherwise be jeopardised by external sources. The local olive cultivar used in making the oil is the **Razzola** olive. Its structure is similar to the *Taggiasca* olive plant, but the branches are less drooping. The leaves are medium sized. The fruit is larger and longer than the *Taggiasca* olive, black in colour, which ripens late and progressively, very rich in oil with a yield of 24.4%. The plant does not resist well to low temperatures, but is constant in its production.



### Stamped corzetti pasta (corzétti stanpæ or corzetti del Levante)

This pasta is "stamped" because the decoration of these small medallion-shaped discs of pasta is stamped using a wooden stamp called *corzetto*. This decorates the pasts in order to "get it ready" to hold the sauce better. The word *corzetto* indicates both the wooden stamp (pear, apple, beech, or maple wood) and the engraved pasta.



### Ingredients

white wheat flour from Suvero  
extra-virgin olive oil  
grated cheese  
nutmeg  
water, as needed

### Preparation

Mix all the ingredients together, adding the water a little at a time, until you get a soft, even dough. Roll the dough out into a sheet and cut into circles. Cook in boiling salted water for just a few minutes. Once drained, add your preferred sauce. The traditional sauce for corzetti is made with minced poultry, onion, celery, and bay leaves, or by mixing butter with pine nuts, marjoram or sage, and cheese. However, thanks to their decorations, they hold the sauce even more; therefore, they go well with pesto or mushroom sauce.

### HONEY

In the area of **Calice al Cornoviglio**, there is an ancient link between the **honey**, the land, and the culture, but the discovery of beekeeping activity, almost entirely abandoned during the previous years, dates to



# ALTA VIA DEI MONTI LIGURI



## LOCATION

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## LENGTH

440 km of the main route, over 80 linking paths – maintained by the AVML Association – from Ventimiglia to La Spezia

## PROTECTED AREAS OF THE ALTA VIA

Regional Park of the Ligurian Alps, Regional Park of Piana Crixia\*, Regional Park of Bric Tana\*, Regional Nature Reserve of Adelasia, Regional Park of Beigua, Urban Park of Mura, Regional Park of Antola\*\*, Regional Park of Portofino\*\*, Regional Park of Aveto, Regional Nature Park of Montemarcello – Magra – Vara

\*The Park is linked to the Alta Via through the Bormida Natura (BN) itinerary

\*\*The Park is connected to Alta Via through Via del Mare (VM)

The Alta Via dei Monti Liguri is a hiking trail that covers approximately 440 km from west to east along the Ligurian ridge.

It is a panoramic route that invites hikers and tourists to get to know Liguria from on high, leaving their gaze wander over the blue sky as far as the horizon, blurring with the sea. The Alta Via

enables you to discover uncontaminated parts of Liguria. Its route goes along the ancient communicating roads used in bygone times for trading, traces of old mule tracks which climbed up the Ligurian ridge from the sea and then descended towards the Po Valley. The route is divided into 43 stages, linked to the main

urban centres and villages in the valley floor by a network of connecting paths. It is also included in the **European network of hiking trails** that link the Mediterranean to Central Europe. The route crosses through various natural environments with **top landscape value**. Depending on the altitude, the exposure of the slopes, and the geological conformation, you switch from a Mediterranean environment to an Alpine setting, with high-lying meadows, still used today as

grazing ground, woods of larch trees and rocky crests topped with snow, giving shelter to endemic flora which testifies the Ice Age environments. Following along the ridge, you cross through **forests of century-old beech trees and chestnuts**, a tree used over time by man as a source of food. In many sections, the trail comes to **old paved paths**, remains of **mule tracks**, and the **salt routes**, Medieval stone bridges that climbed up the slopes and reached the ridge crossings, places where

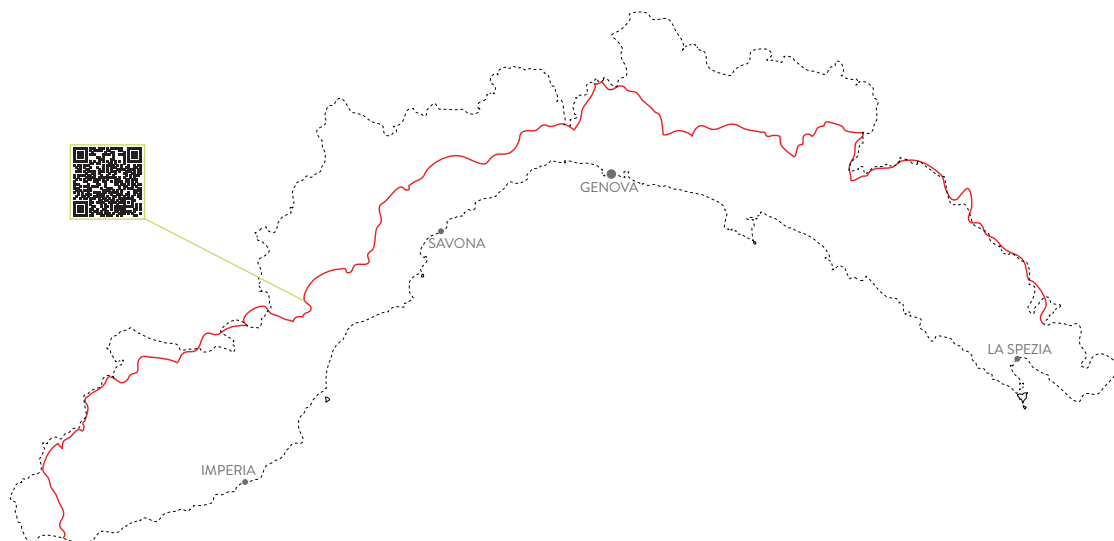
markets were once held to trade products. It is not uncommon to walk through nuclei of houses that were once inhabited, linked to livestock grazing, ice houses for gathering snow as ice reserves during the summer, small huts or charcoal burners. The Alta Via dei Monti Liguri is a long path, perfect for long hikes, but it can also be followed just over sections that only take a few days, thanks to the numerous roads and crossings that meet the trail, or exploiting the numerous connecting paths.



## RECOMMENDED ITINERARY

**Among eagles and whales (from Calizzano to Verzi)**

You mainly walk along forest roads, along the spine of the woods. From Calizzano, you take the road for Colle di Melogno, then turn right for the **Sanctuary of Madonna della Grazie**. The path then climbs up the spine of the woods, entering into the beech woods, and then arrives at **Fonte della Greppia**, where you find the **Casa Rifugio del Corpo Forestale dello Stato** (state







## THE GARDEN OF BIODIVERSITY

Thanks to funding from two different projects, one from the CNR (National research council) in collaboration with the Solidarius Cooperative, the "Mediterraneo" Association and "Il Cigno" Consortium, and the other from Slow Food Liguria, the "Garden of Biodiversity" was created in the spring of 2014 by Franco Andreoni, the head of the Slow Food Community of the chestnut growers in the province of La Spezia. The idea is to give a name to all the

varieties of the tree (approximately 400) that populate the land that Franco worked with care all these years, inherited from his grandparents in Pianesia. Franco's daughter, Elisa, in agreement with the Slow Food Gulf of Poets section in charge of the area, gathered photographic and documentary material on the various species of the tree variety that her father had taken care of over the years in order to bring Pianesia back to life despite the floods and abandonment. In addition, since 2014, Matteo

forestry shelter) at 1174 metres above sea level. You continue along the Alta Via dei Monti Liguri towards the wooded **Conca dei Carbonari**; here in times past the charcoal-burners used to prepare conical stacks of wood, covered in soil that they lit on the inside and left to burn slowly in order to obtain carbon. Once you get to **Giogo di Giustenice** (1143 metres above sea level), you can descend to the **Pian delle Bosse** refuge at 841 metres, owned by the CAI (Italian Alpine Club) of Loano, or you can reach the panoramic peak of **Mount Carmo**, which offers a wonderful view over the coast and the Ligurian mountains. If you take the *full red triangle* path, in 1 hour and 15 minutes you get to the shelter. To descend to **Verzi**, follow the path marked with *two full red squares*, which alternates in sections between a path in the woods and mule tracks through meadows and vegetable gardens which descend towards the coast. The path passes alongside a "hut", a small circular stone building, used as a shelter by farmers.

Trombello, a young member of the Slow Food Movement, has been following Franco's work and taking photographs of it in order to conserve important documentation. The ancient varieties of the **chestnut trees**, many of which are only found in the Vara Valley (as many as 25 varieties of chestnut of the almost 50 with fruit found in almost the entire peninsula), are the centrepiece of the collection alongside the numerous fruit plants conserved thanks to timely grafting.

## THE CHESTNUT TREE

The chestnut tree's link with the populations of the hinterland was very strong in the past, to the point that it was known as the *arbu*, or tree, par excellence. In his book *Pomona Italiana*, Gallesio cites two varieties of chestnut tree that are distinguished in the Ligurian Apennines, **Gabbiana** and **Ciria**. Again thanks to Gallesio, we learn that the market for these varieties of chestnuts was even international, with exportation to Marseille and Barcelona. They currently have a regional and inter-regional market, selling them as dried chestnuts and chestnut flour. The tree has an average strength and a good yield. The fruit is oval in shape and its marking is medium to small. The skin, or pericarp, is a dark brown colour and is very thin, whereas the inner flesh is a very pronounced greyish white colour and is soft, buttery, and subtle. The chestnut tree probably grew spontaneously in these woods, but in the Middle Ages people wanted to obtain larger

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and more consistent fruit. Therefore, they grafted the wild trees. From then on, the cultivation of chestnut trees became widespread up to the start of the 19th century. The cultivation of the chestnut was so popular, that in the Stura Valley the word *erburu* (tree) means chestnut tree. During the time of Napoleon, three-quarters of the cultivated land of the province of Genoa as it was then, were used for chestnuts and the cultivation area of this tree even included the hill of Albaro, now a residential area of Genoa just a few hundred metres from the sea, where, up the end of the 19th century, there were houses with **shingle roofs**: slates in chestnut wood. Perfect for making flour, the chestnuts are dried in characteristic *seccherecci*, which were genuine "oven-huts" where the chestnuts were placed on wooden grates and dried slowly at a low heat for approximately 40 days. Once they had reached the right level of humidity, they are cleaned and ground to make flour (from *Atlante Regionale dei prodotti tradizionali*, Liguria Region).

## Castagnaccio (chestnut flour cake)

On feast days, chestnut flour was used to make *castagnaccio*, a typical and famous dessert with an unmistakable aroma that cheered up the month of November and other periods as well.

### Ingredients

300 g of chestnut flour  
50 g of pine nuts  
100 g of raisins  
fennel seeds  
extra-virgin olive oil  
salt, as needed



### Preparation

Dilute flour in a terrine and add the water needed to make a batter. Add salt and pour into a well-greased tin. Sprinkle the raisins, previously softened in lukewarm water, onto the mixture, along with the pine nuts, and fennel seeds. Baste with oil and bake in the oven at 190°C until cracks form in the surface. It can be served either warm or cold. Unlike *panella*, a simpler version of the same cake which was almost exclusively consumed in the mountain areas, the *castagnaccio* was also widely eaten in the city. Starting from the autumn months, you can still find it in *farinotti*, bakers specialised in *farinata*, alongside *panissa*, made with chickpeas, and vegetable quiches.







