

Cinque Terre

Monterosso Vernazza
Corniglia

Manarola

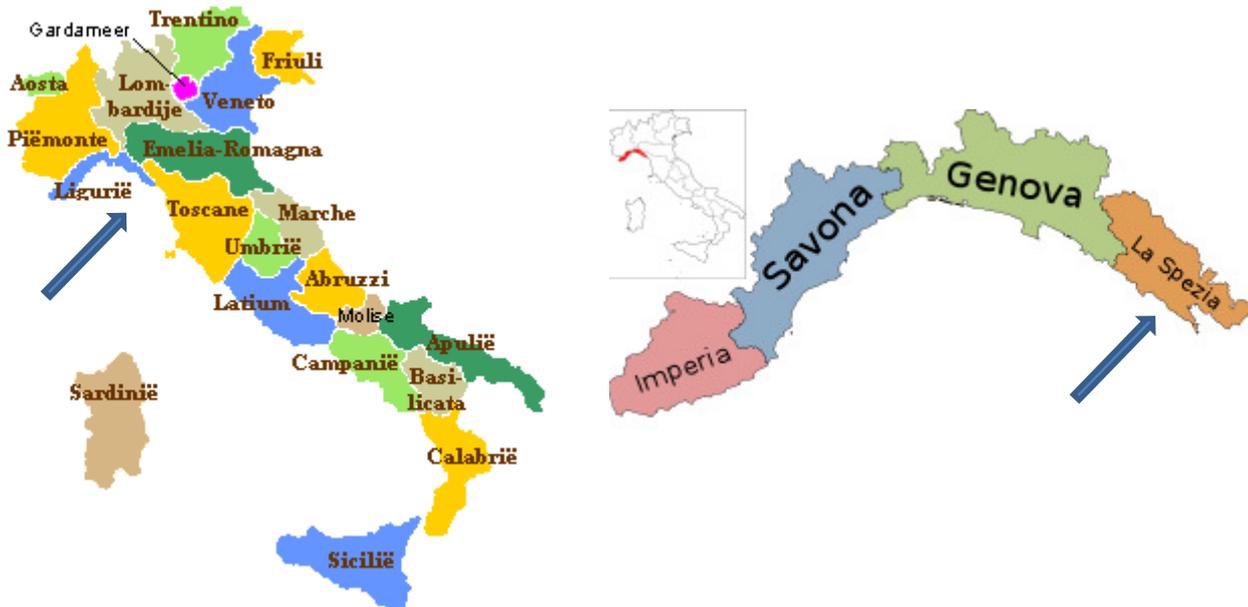
Riomaggiore

Cinque Terre – Frequently asked questions

Where is Cinque Terre located ?

Cinque Terre is located in the northwest of Italy. It is a part of Liguria, one of the 20 regions that make up Italy. Liguria is one of the smallest regions and covers the Mediterranean Coast from France in the west, to Tuscany in the East.

Liguria has 4 provinces : Imperia, Savona, Genova and La Spezia



Cinque Terre is a small coastal area of hardly 10 miles long, located in the province of La Spezia. Five villages make up Cinque Terre : Riomaggiore, Manarola, Corniglia, Vernazza en Monterosso.



What is the best time to visit Cinque Terre ?

The main season in Cinque Terre goes from March till the end of October. Most hotels consider the “high season” from April till September. In July and August, it can be quite crowded in Cinque Terre. If you like the bustle, it’s OK but if you come for walking in these months you should get up early to avoid the heat.

Spring is usually wetter till april, although many Italians complain that seasons do not respect anymore the normal course of nature.

In March – April, temperatures can go up above 20°C. In summer, they reach easily the 30°s, although the proximity of the sea ensures some cooling !

Of course you can also choose to visit Cinque Terre off-season. Some hotels, B&Bs and restaurants remain open throughout the year. Around Christmas and New Year, the Nativity in Manarola attracts quite some visitors.

How to visit Cinque Terre ?

This is a question we often get. Of course, the depends on a number of elements :

- How long do you plan to stay ?
- How far / long do you want to walk ?
- Where are you staying ?
- Do you have a car or do you use only public transport ?

To give a quick insight in the possibilities, we made up a sample program for a visit of Cinque Terre in one, two, three or more days.

Cinque Terre in 1 day

Yes, you can ... visit the five Cinque Terre towns in one day or walk the Sentiero Azzurra and see all five towns in one day. But that is not what we recommend. It is simply a waste of beauty. You would see a lot, but probably would not have the time to feel it thoroughly. So if you have only one day, we strongly recommend you to choose two or three of the villages and to walk a section of the Sentiero Azzurro.

- Walk from Vernazza to Corniglia
- Take the train to Manarola
- Take a boat to Riomaggiore, you will see the Via dell’Amore from the sea.

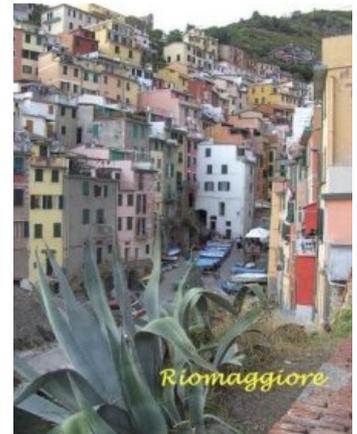
Vernazza can easily be reached by train from either of the villages, La Spezia or Levanto. If you have a car, you can find a free parking in La Spezia or pay a parking ticket in Manarola (not recommended when traveling in July / August).

Riomaggiore

Riomaggiore is the first of the five villages, coming from La Spezia. It is located at the bottom of a narrow valley. The houses, with their typical colours, are leaning against the hills. Above the houses, the hills are terraced. Some of them are still used to cultivate grapes and olives.

Riomaggiore has about 2000 inhabitants, which makes it, together with Monterosso, the biggest village of the Cinque Terre.

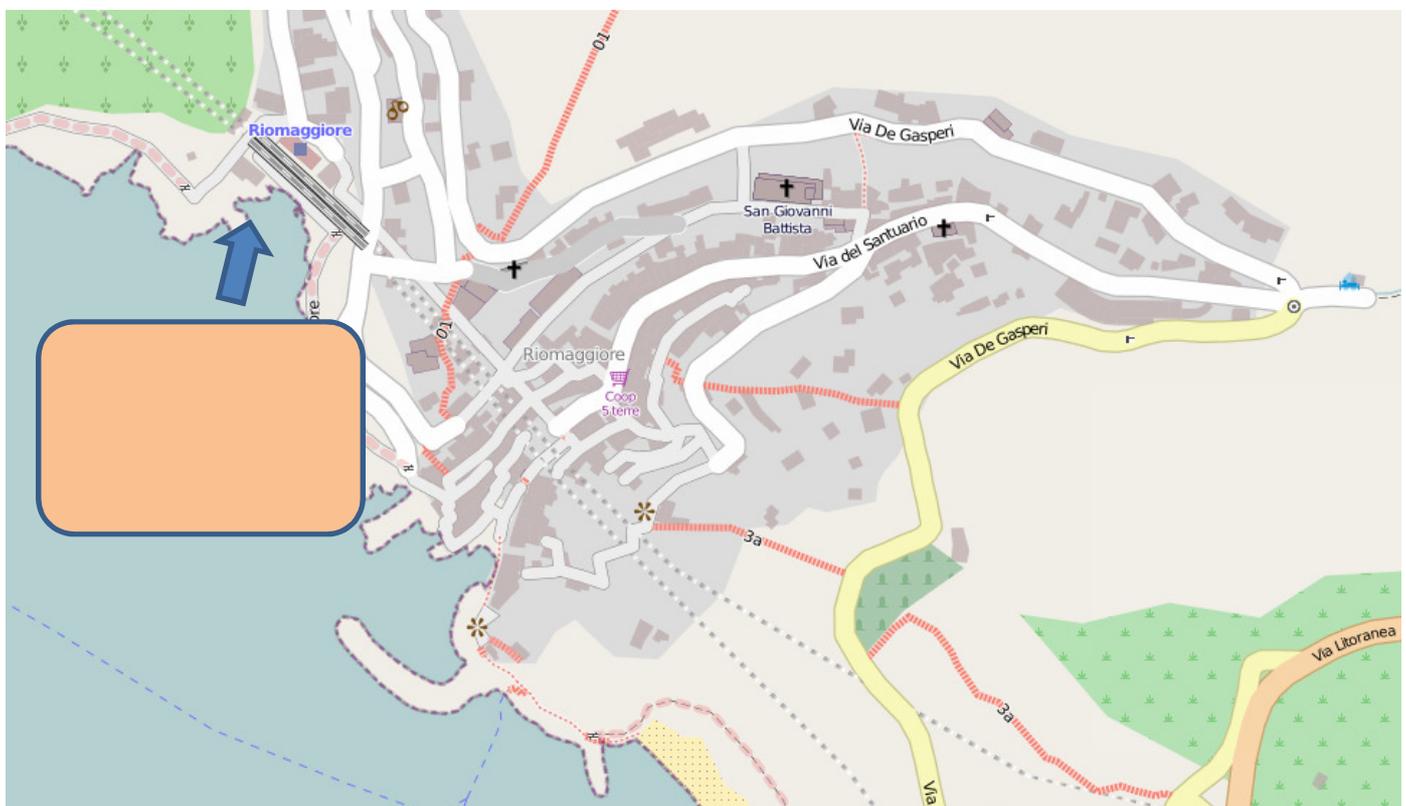
The town is split in two parts. If you come out of the train station, you turn left (up some stairs) to go the Via dell' Amore. On your right, you will find a tunnel that takes you to the other part of the town. A third alternative is to go up the road in front of the station. It leads you to the center of the town, passing by the two churches in Riomaggiore (see below).



If you take the tunnel, you arrive at the bottom of the main street. Go left (up) if you want to do some shopping, go right (down some stairs and small covered alley) to see the little harbor, from where you can take the boat to either Manarola or Portovenere. If you continue to the left, a short walk takes you to a small secluded (stony) beach.

If you come by car to Riomaggiore, you have to leave it at the entrance of the town (along the SP32). The price goes up to 2 / 3 EUR per hour. Take into account that there are only a very limited amount of parkings available for tourists.

The best view on Riomaggiore can be seen from the SP 370, close to the exit leading to Riomaggiore (see also the chapter on the SP370)



Attractions in Riomaggiore

Chiesa dell'Assunta : church dating from the 15th century, located on the main street in the upper part of the town. Above the altar, there is a triptych, representing the virgin Mary with child, flanked by the Saints Francis and Saint John. To the left of the altar is a wooden statue of Mary with child, dating from the 14th Century. It is called the Madonna delle Catene (Madonna in chains). The chains refer to the period where the Muslims invaded the region, putting the local population in chains and asking for ransoms to free them.

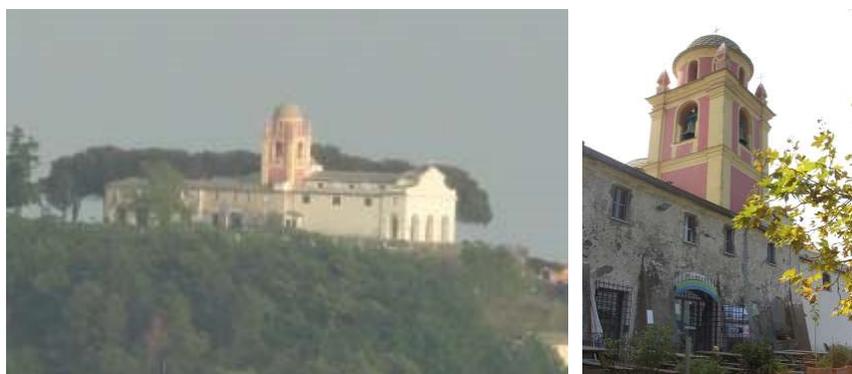


Chiesa di San Giovanni Battista : Small church in the upper part of town, dating from the 14th century, which was rebuilt in neogothic style in the 19th century. The rose window of the church, which is typical Ligurian style, is flanked by the four evangelists. From the square in front of the church, you can enjoy a beautiful view on the roofs of the houses of Riomaggiore.



Santuario della Madonna de Montenero : Sanctuary built in the 14th century, high in the hills above Riomaggiore. From the square in front of the Promontory, you enjoy a magnificent view on the Cinque Terre coast up to Punto Mesco. You can see the 5 villages in one view. To reach the Santuario, take the Sentiero N° 3 from the center of Riomaggiore.

Linked to the Santuario is also an information center, where you have the possibility to rent mountainbikes.



The Santuario is part of the "Santuarii dei Cinque Terre", together with the Santuario di Nostra Signora di Montenero in Riomaggiore, the Santuario di Nostra Signora della Salute in Manarola (Volastra), the Santuario di Nostra Signora delle Grazie in Corniglia (San Bernardino), the Santuario di Reggio in Vernazza and the Santuario della Madonna di Soviore in Monterosso.

Hiking in Cinque Terre

Cinque Terre has a large network of hiking trails. The two most important ones are the Sentiero Azzurro, which follows the coast between Riomaggiore and Monterosso, and the Sentiero N°1, a long distance trail that goes from Portovenere to Levanto. In between are numerous trails, that allow to follow circular trails. The fact that you have to pay to walk the Sentiero Azzurro is almost unique in the world. But you hear no tourist complain, certainly not after having walked the path.

The Via dell'Amore has almost a mythical attraction. That you have to pay. It is the easiest part of the Sentiero Azzurro and therefore the most popular track. On top days, the path can be so crowded that it is not funny anymore. If you can, you better avoid to go there in July, August and on top weekends (unless you love to be part of the crowd). Halfway between Manarola and Riomaggiore, you will find hundred (if not thousands) of locks on the balustrade. The key have been thrown into the sea, as a symbol for an everlasting love.

At this moment, some parts of Sentiero Azzurro are closed due to land or rockslides. The actual situation situation can be found on the map below. The trails in red are closed. It is clear there are sufficient trails for those who want to walk.

Works are ongoing (for over a year) on the track between Manarola and the station of Corniglia. This section is expected to reopen by next year (2014)



Sentiero Azzurro

(the blue path)

The Sentiero N°2, also called Sentiero Azzurro, links Riomaggiore with Monterosso through a walking trail along the coast. The path is offering magnificent views on the Cinque Terre coastline and villages. The degree of difficulty is going up, starting from Riomaggiore in the direction of Monterosso. It is never dangerous or really difficult, but a good condition is required, especially between Corniglia and Monterosso.

Due to the mud slides after the heavy rains of October 25th, the trail was closed for a few months. As from June 2012 all sections of the Sentiero Azzurro have been reopened, except the section between Manarola and the train station of Corniglia, which was closed due to an earlier landslide.

In September 2012 fate struck again. 4 Australian tourists were killed on the the Via dell'Amore by a falling rock. Again the paths were close. At this moment the Via dell' Amore is still closed. A law suit is still going on to assign the responsibility for the accident. As long as this goes on, the Via dell' Amore will probably remain closed.

To walk on the path, you have to pay (5 Eur for a day) but it's really worthwhile and the trail is well maintained. The 'Cinque Terre Card' is for sale in the tourist offices or at the beginning of the path in each of the villages.

You can walk the trail in one day. But if you have the time, we definitely recommend to take at least 2 days, so that you have time to stay a few hours in each of the villages. You can combine the walks with either a train trip or a boat trip to get to back to your place of departure.

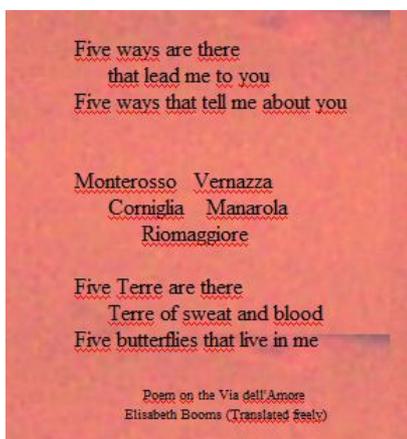
Via dell'Amore Riomaggiore - Manarola

The Via dell'Amore is the shortest and the easiest track between Riomaggiore and Manarola. The path is well-paved and fairly flat. It is by far the most crowded part of the trail, especially in summer.

In the middle of the path, you come along 'the lover's lock, a place to seal your 'eternal love'".

At sunset, when most tourists are gone, you can enjoy the scenery in all quietness.

Distance : 1 mile *** Difficulty : easy



Carrara

On the road from Pisa to Cinque Terre, you also pass along Carrara that is known because of its marble mines. From the highway, you can see the White Mountains. It is both an open exploitation (overground) and an internal exploitation (inside the mountain). Information on the internet is scarce. Fortunately our 'waiter' in Carrara could give us some useful tips.

On his advice we take the road to Miseglia (via Ospedale). We do not enter the village, but immediately follow the road to the 'Cave' Fantiscritti. At the bridge with arches you can make a first stop, but you still need to drive a mile or two farther to reach Fantiscritti. Here we opted for the guided tour of Marmot Tours, which brought us 600 meters deep into the mountain. In a huge space (larger than a cathedral) marble block with dimensions up to 11 meters and a weight of up to 60 tons, are still extracted. The sawing of one single block needs about one week. Large trucks take the blocks outside of the mine.



In Fantiscritti it is also possible to make an aboveground tour (with 4x4) and to visit (free access) the museum of Walter Danesi, in which some sculptures and especially the old tools are shown. Not to be missed!

After the visit, you should definitely continue driving, in other words, not return on your steps. After a few hundred meters you will be sent in a tunnel of about 1.5 km, and arrive on the other side of the mountain. When leaving the tunnel you have the choice. Right it goes downhill and through another tunnel (careful when driving out of this!) back to the bridge with arches. If you turn left you will come to a bifurcation which brings you also to Colonnata.

Park the car in the parking lot before entering into the village. The stairs then go to the square and the church. There is a statue of the miners with another beautiful view on the opposite mountain, where the heavily loaded trucks search their way down, along impossible hairpin bends.

You should not leave Colonnata without tasting the 'Lardo di Colonnata'. This is the fat layer of the bacon that for several months matured with salt in marble tubs and then is served in thin slices on a hot sandwich. Colonnata, with only 300 inhabitants, has not less than 8 producers of bacon.



The town of Carrara is also worth a visit. In the center of the city are of course numerous buildings erected in marble, with the Duomo as the main attraction, and further different palaces in Piazza d'Alberica



The museum at Viale XX Settembre accommodates both artworks as information about the exploitation of the marble.

Bus timetable La Spezia – Carrara

La Spezia - Carrara				Carrara - La Spezia					
FERIALE				FERIALE					
PIAZZA CHIODO			13.05	CARRARA	06.45	08.05	13.10	13.15	14.15
VIA CHIODO giardini	06.46	12.02	13.06	DOGANA V. Aurelia	07.01	08.21	13.25	13.31	14.31
OSPEDALE V. 24 maggio	06.50	12.07	13.10	PIAZZA GRANDE	07.02	08.22	13.26	13.32	14.32
MIGLIARINA	06.55	12.12	13.15	LUNI FS	07.03	08.23	13.28	13.33	14.33
FORNOLA	07.08	12.27	13.28	PONTE BETTIGNA	07.04	08.24	13.29	13.34	14.34
SARZANA P. Terzi	06.10	07.20	12.40	SAN LAZZARO	07.07	08.27	13.32	13.37	14.37
SARZANA P. Martiri	06.11	07.21	12.39	SARZANA P. Martiri	07.14	08.34	13.39	13.44	14.44
SAN LAZZARO	06.18	07.28	12.46	12.48	13.48	14.45	14.48		
PONTE BETTIGNA	06.21	07.31	12.49	12.51	13.50	14.45	14.55		
LUNI FS	06.22	07.32	12.50	12.52	13.51	14.46	14.55		
PIAZZA GRANDE	06.23	07.33	12.53	13.53	14.48	14.55	15.00		
DOGANA V. Aurelia	06.25	07.35	12.55	13.55	14.50	15.00	15.15		
CARRARA	06.40	07.50	13.10	14.10	07.45	09.20	14.20	15.20	
					VIA CHIODO portici	07.49	09.25	14.25	15.25
					PIAZZA CHIODO	07.50			

Train

The best way to visit Cinque Terre is by train. The line between La Spezia and Levanto follows the coastal line, although you do not see much of its beauty, as a large part of the line is going through tunnels. Every village in Cinque Terre has its station close to the center of the town. One exception : Corniglia, where you have to climb 382 steps to reach the village.

There are about 2 trains per hour. The average price between two villages is 2 EUR.

Van / Naar	La Spezia	Riomaggiore	Manarola	Corniglia	Vernazza	Monterosso	Levanto
La Spezia		2,1	2,1	2,4	2,4	2,7	3,4
Riomaggiore	2,1		1,8	1,8	2,1	2,1	2,4
Manarola	2,1	1,8		1,8	1,8	2,1	2,4
Corniglia	2,4	1,8	1,8		1,8	2,1	2,4
Vernazza	2,4	2,1	1,8	1,8		1,8	2,1
Monterosso	2,7	2,1	2,1	2,1	1,8		1,8
Levanto	3,4	2,4	2,4	2,4	2,1	1,8	

The table below gives travel times and a price indicator for a train ride to one of the neighbouring cities, from the station of La Spezia. Prices depend on the type of the train.

From La Spezia to	Travel time	Indicative price (single way)
Rome	3 à 4 h	29 à 54 EUR
Genoa	1 h	9 à 15 EUR
Pisa	50 min	9 à 15 EUR
Milaan	3 à 4 h	10 à 35 EUR
Firenze	2 à 3 h	13 à 18 EUR

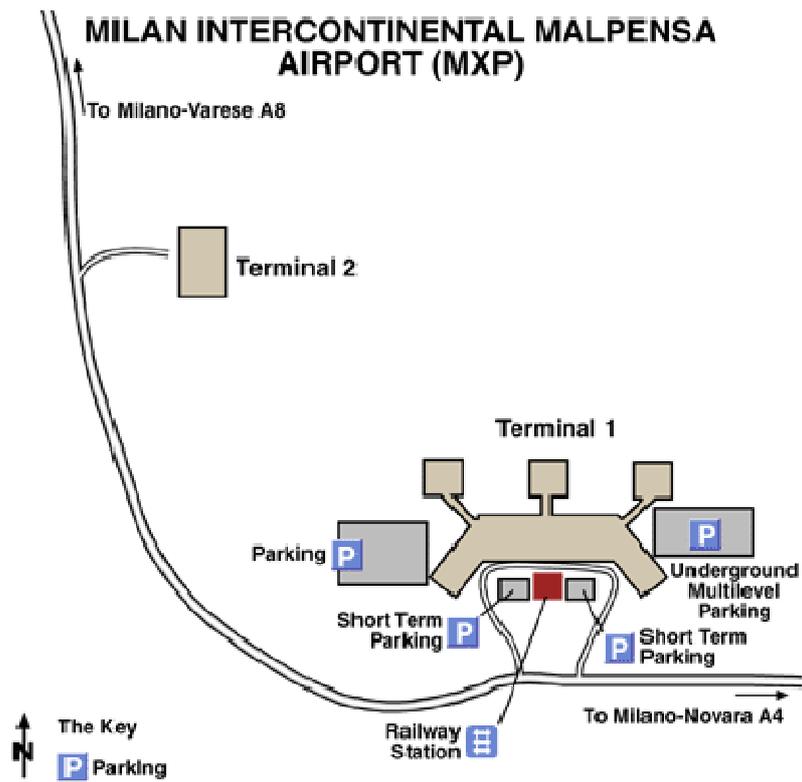
Further information and timetables can be found on <http://www.trenitalia.com>. Chose the option 'tutti i treni', otherwise you only get the info on fast trains.



An advice that can save you money : be sure to validate your ticket at one of the machines before entering the trains. Controls on the train are frequent and having no ticket or an unvalidated ticket can cost as much as 50 EUR.

Malpensa

Milan Malpensa is located 20 km northwest of Milan.



The train from Milan to Levanto

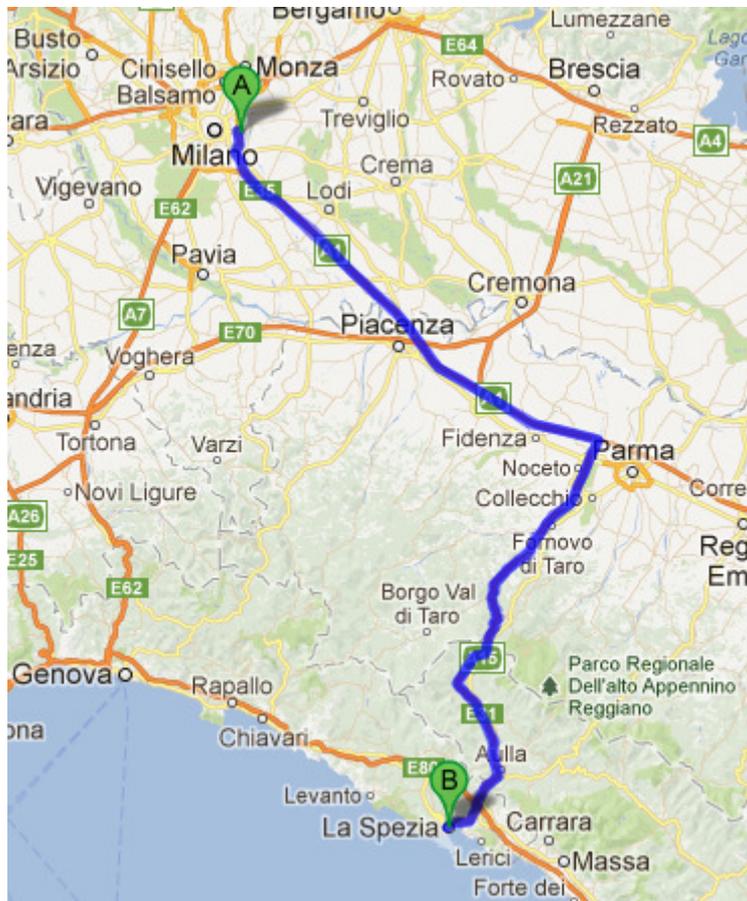
Partenza	Arrivo	Durata	Treno	Prezzi
Milano Centrale 06:10	Levanto 08:53	02:43	Intercity 651	Prezzi a partire da 19.00 €
Milano Centrale 07:25	Levanto 10:54	03:29	Regionale Veloce 2181	Prezzi a partire da 17.25 €
Milano Centrale 08:10	Levanto 11:10	03:00	Intercity 657	Prezzi a partire da 22.00 €

Partenza	Arrivo	Durata	Treno	Prezzi
Levanto 19:01	Milano Centrale 21:50	02:49	Intercity 684	Prezzi a partire da 9.00 €
Levanto 19:24	Genova Piazza Principe 20:58	03:26 <small>Soluzione con cambio</small>	Regionale 11214	Prezzi a partire da 15.30 €
Genova Piazza Principe 21:19	Milano Centrale 22:50		Intercity 748	

Meer info : <https://www.lefrece.it/B2CWeb/search.do?parameter=searchOutputViewer>

By car from Milan to La Spezia

Milano Linate : 220 km, 2 hours
Milano Malpensa : 272 km, 2.5 hours



Monterosso – Restaurants

La Cantina del Pescatore

via V Emanuele 19, Monterosso al Mare



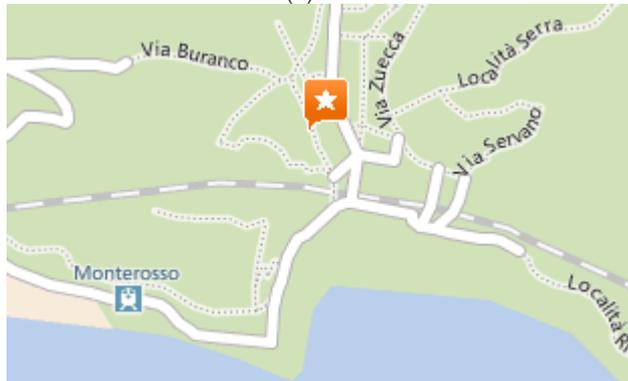
Ristorante Via Venti

Via XX settembre, 32, 19016 Monterosso al Mare
+39 (0)187 818347



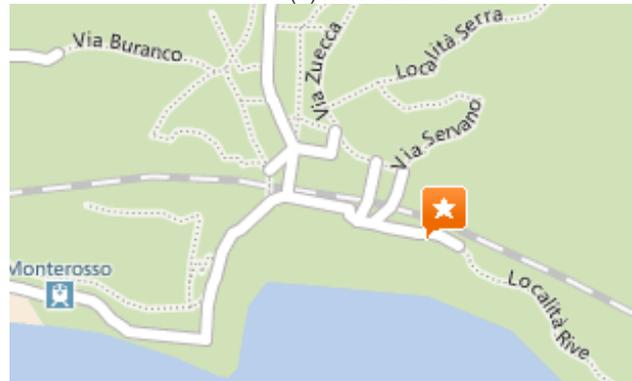
Ristorante Pizzeria Da Ely

Via Vittorio Emanuele 15, 19016 Monterosso al Mare
+39 (0)187 818206



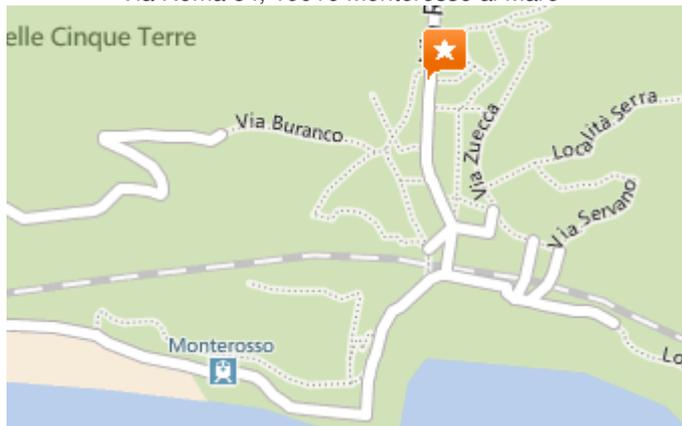
Il Casello

Via Corone, Monterosso al Mare
+39 (0)187.818330



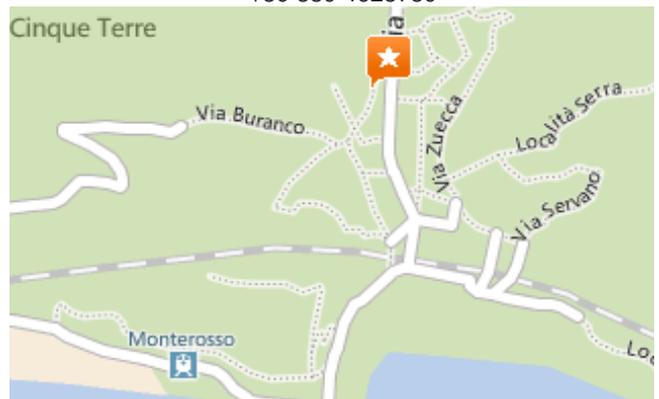
Ristorante L'Alta Marea

Via Roma 54, 19016 Monterosso al Mare



Trattoria Da Oscar

Via Vittorio Emanuele 67, 19016 Monterosso al Mare
+39 339 4628739



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