



Cinque Terre & Portofino Kayaking Adventure

Kayaking from the Portofino Peninsula, along the villages of the Cinque Terre to Portovenere & the Gulf of Poets!



8-day kayaking Inn-to-Inn Kayaking Trip: from Portofino to Portovenere



TRIP NOTES 2017

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Introduction

Liguria boasts some of the most beautiful stretches of Italian Coast: the now famous Cinque Terre, the Peninsula of Portofino and the so-called 'Gulf of Poets'.

Located halfway Genova and the Gulf of La Spezia, the Peninsula of Portofino has been a sought-after destination for wealthy tourists since the beginning of the 19th century. The landscape is dotted with beautiful villa's and a few picturesque colourful villages. Of course there is colourful Portofino itself, resort for the Italian jet-set, but perhaps Camogli and Santa Margherita Ligure are even more beautiful. But perhaps the main feature of the Peninsula of Portofino is its stunning nature. Now a protected area& Marine Reserve, you will be astonished by the abundance of sea life. On several occasions you might take the chance to do some snorkelling, and together with our marine experts, discover the beauty of the Mediterranean.

Paddling around the peninsula, you will be impressed by the sheer cliffs and discover several minor inlets. You will paddle around the castle and lighthouse of Portofino, an impressive sight ! Like is approaching Camogli, the 'City of the 1000 white sailing boats' in a kayak. You'll be astonished to see these high-rising colourful painted houses set in this stunning coastal scenery. We'll go ashore for one night at the a beautifully located Abbey of San Fruttuoso, dating back to the 11th century. San Fruttuoso is set in its own cove and reachable only by boat or on foot. Staying at this isolated inlet of this beautiful coastline is an unforgettable experience!

The 'Cinque Terre' gets its name from the five picturesque villages of Monterosso, Vernazza, Corniglia, Manarola and Riomaggiore. The area, now a major National Park, is a unique part of Italy. For over a thousand years people have lived in this dramatic landscape, slowly altering its features and cultivating the steep hillsides that lead down to rocky shores. An extensive network of ancient mule tracks – today used as footpaths- can take you through an extraordinary landscape of terraces, built by hand with stones and earth. Paddling along the coast from Levanto to Riomaggiore, will make you admire the unique coastline perhaps even more.

The last stop of this great sea kayaking adventure is the nearby small town of Portovenere, a charming medieval town at the entrance of the Gulf of Poets. Here we'll make a full loop of the romantic island of Palmaria, in, just off the coast in front of Portovenere.

You will discover that with reason this part of Italy has become a sought after place, since Victorian times, but as well that it takes only a little effort to get 'off the beaten track'. At only a few hundred metres away from the famous places, you will find yourself surrounded by nature. Its dramatic coastline offers wonderful views, different every step you take, and every metre you paddle.... Your vision will blur as you focus on the wonderment of history displayed along this amazing stretch of coastline. It offers an extraordinary palette of colours, with deep azure skies, white limestone cliffs, deep blue seas, and bright citrus orchards lit by the dazzling Mediterranean sun. This intoxicating sensual feast inspires a celebration of the goodness of life itself.

Paddling in the waters of the Marine Protected Area of Portofino and the Cinque Terre, you will have the chance to admire the crystalline waters populated by a great fish variety. Kayaking, snorkelling, a night over at San Fruttuoso a relaxing stay at beautiful portovenere; sea and mountain will help you to knock off from the daily stress and recover the contact with nature. On this tour we take you beyond the crowded beaches, and you'll be lying on isolated beaches and paddling alone with the seagulls.... In short, you'll discover the real Italian paradise.

This tour can also be done in different 'legs': only the Portofino part, or only the Cinque Terre part. However we recommend the full tour, which gives you the opportunity to explore the amazing variety of the Liguria Coast.

We recommend this kayaking tour in combination with one of our [self-guided 'Cinque Terre & Portofino' walking tours](#), but of course we can as well provide route notes for 'just' one or two hikes.

We run this trip with a minimum of 4 persons. The standard starting accommodations are good 3 to 4-star hotels, but on request different hotels can be booked, from simple 3- to luxurious 5-star hotels (where available).

Please note: *this is a moderate to demanding trip which is suitable **only** for those who have experience with sea kayaking and a good general physical condition. Although the waters of the Mediterranean are usually calm, occasionally we can encounter a rougher sea*



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DAY-TO-DAY PROGRAMME

Day 0 Genova/Pisa (or Santa Margherita Ligure)

Arrival in Santa Margherita Ligure in case you arrive a day earlier. The nearest international airports are Pisa and Genova, from where Santa Margherita can easily be reached by train. Also from Milan, Rome (and many other cities) there are many (direct) trains. Several hotels can be booked in Santa Margherita Ligure or nearby Portofino, ranging from 3 to 5-star, either 'downtown' centrally located, or near the harbour or train station dinner

Day 1 Arrival – Santa Margherita Ligure

Arrival in Santa Margherita Ligure. After settling in your hotel, at literally two steps from the beach, you can already go for a short stroll, or maybe there is some time for a dive into the Mediterranean.

Halfway the afternoon we meet our tour leader and the rest of the group. After a brief introduction of the tour, you are being brought to the charming small hamlet of Niasca, close to Portofino. Here we will outfit everyone with paddle and PFD and offer some basic kayaking instruction. Starting on the beach, the guide describes the paddling technique and the basis of kayak. Then we go for a short introduction trip, towards the amazingly beautiful natural harbour of Portofino. We go ashore near the lighthouse and with a short stroll we reach the perfect spot for our relaxed 'aperitivo'. Then we slowly peddle back to Niasca, after which we are being brought back to our hotel. In the evening we have a great meal in a nice restaurant close to our hotel.

Accommodation: Santa Margherita Ligure - Meals included: 1 'aperitivo', 1 dinner

Day 2 From Portofino to the bay of San Fruttuoso

Today we'll discover the best parts of the promontory of Portofino, now a [Protected Marine Area](#). Starting from Niasca's bay, the tour destination will be San Fruttuoso di Camogli. The first bay where we pass is the amazing harbour of Portofino itself. Its colourful houses make up a stunning panorama, complete by its beautiful natural harbour, coloured thanks to the typical fisherman's boats moored around. From the sea you can spot San Giorgio's Church and the famous Lighthouse, reference point for all sailors. Around midday we reach the Vitrale Inlet, a sort of tiny fiord in which you enter zigzagging through the rocks. It's a natural swimming pool where we take off from the kayaks, wear mask and fins and dive in the clear waters sighting the great variety of fish. You will see groupers, sea breams, and barracudas, besides anemones, starfish, octopus and much more. It's time to have a little rest, lie down on the rock and have lunch with the typical Genoese *focaccia*. Arriving in San Fruttuoso di Camogli you will be charmed by the medieval Abbey, which its columns in the sand; close to the mountain, near the sea, it represents the richness of our territory.



San Fruttuoso



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Another plunge is due, this time to appreciate one of Italy's most famous statues: the underwater (!) statue of the 'Cristo degli Abissi'. An *aperitivo* on the beach staring at the sunset, a quick change of clothes and everything is ready for the short walk that will bring us to our base for the night, the 'agririfugio' Molini, a restored old mill, surrounded by century-old olive trees. You will be lucky to stay here! Dinner is entirely made of local organic products from the *agririfugio's* vegetable garden. You'll have a great rest, gently lulled by the sound of the waves.

Accommodation: San Fruttuoso (Camogli) - Meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 picnic lunch, 1 dinner

Day 3 From San Fruttuoso to Punta Chiappa (Camogli) and return to Niasca

Today we'll discover the other side of the Portofino Peninsula. Sun is high in the sky again and time has come to take our kayaks again; but first, a last sight to the panorama that San Fruttuoso's Gulf donates, directly from the terrace precipitous on the sea where you will be served breakfast. We first set off in western direction and shortly find ourselves underneath the impressive towering cliffs of the South Coast of the peninsula, rising up over 500 m. above us. It is possible to make a little detour arriving at Punta Chiappa and leading towards Porto Pidocchio, two "pearls" just behind the Mountain. From here we can already admire the stunning coloured houses of Camogli (experienced paddlers can make the detour and go ashore in Camogli).

Then we return towards our base near Portofino. At lunchtime we reach Cala degli Inglesi, a small creek between the rocks where we will eat lunch, do some snorkelling and lay down for sunbathing. Paddling in total relax we take our way back to Niasca where we will arrive shortly before sunset. After perhaps a last swim, we return to Santa Margherita Ligure. In the evening we can all join for a great evening meal or you might choose yourself from a large choice of restaurants, ranging from simple pizzeria's to exclusive restaurants. After dinner we might decide to make a short stroll along the amazing coastline or go for a drink together.

Accommodation: Santa Margherita Ligure - Meals included: 1 breakfast (dinner free)

Day 4 From the Portofino Peninsula to Sestri Levante

After breakfast we'll load our kayaks and begin paddling in eastern direction. The first part of the coastline is stunningly beautiful, with many beautiful coloured villa's in a unique setting. We pass the stylish resort town of Rapallo and the small colourful village of Zoagli, where we can go ashore for a coffee break. Then we paddle for a while along a flat coastline with broad sandy beaches, past the towns of Chiavari and Lavagna. Of course there are several possibilities to go ashore and have a swim, or a sandwich and a drink, in one of the many beach clubs.

Near Sestri Levante the coastline becomes wild & stunningly beautiful again. We pass the headland and disembark in one of Italy's most beautiful bays, the 'Baia del Silenzio', under our hotel. There is some time for a swim, or if you still have the energy, a walk onto the headland, before we all go for dinner in town. After dinner it is almost compulsory to go for a stroll in this romantic little town, or along the beautiful seaside boulevard.

Accommodation: Sestri Levante - Meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 dinner



Sestri Levante



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Day 5 From Sestri Levante to the Cinque Terre

After breakfast we'll continue paddling in eastern direction, towards the Cinque Terre National Park. As we glide through warm blue water the stunning coast unfolds before us. We paddle along the beach at Riva Trigoso (with its impressive shipyards) and then the coast becomes wild again. We continue along the nice seaside towns of Moneglia, Deiva Marina, with their large beaches and then Framura and Bonassola, under the towering cliffs. There are many possibilities to stop for our lunch, either a picnic lunch on the beach, or a nice slice of focaccia and a drink somewhere in a nice bar. Also are there many occasions to grab our daily gelato. Towards the end of the afternoon, we arrive at Levanto, surrounded by pine forests, olive groves and vineyards. Levanto is a lively little town with a large sandy beach and a charming medieval centre. Also out of season there is still some 'local life', with bars and restaurants open, as the town doesn't live from tourism only, making the town a lovely place for an overnight stay. At night we have a nice meal altogether in one of the typical local restaurants.

Accommodation: Levanto - Meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 dinner



Day 6 Into the Heart of the Cinque Terre

After breakfast we'll load our kayaks and begin paddling the coast of Cinque Terre National Park. As we glide through warm blue water the panorama of Cinque Terre unfolds before us. Steep cliffs topped vineyards along which the towns are set a few kilometres apart. Our first stop is picturesque village of Monterosso. Then we continue to arguably the prettiest of the five villages, Vernazza. After landing on the beach in the town's small harbour we'll explore narrow alleyways and climb into the vineyards for a view that captures the iconic scenery of Cinque Terre. After lunch we'll re-board the kayaks for the paddle to Corniglia. As we skirt the shoreline Corniglia reveals itself like a castle set atop the cliffs overlooking the sea. We continue and glide past Manarola's waterfront. After that we'll paddle alongside the famous *Via dell'Amore* (the 'Walk of Love') - now closed to hikers, so only to be discovered from the sea! Towards the end of the afternoon we land at Riomaggiore. After landing and perhaps a refreshing swim a short climb up ancient stairs takes us into the village where we'll stay for the night. In the evening we are free to go out for dinner in one of the local restaurants or pizzerias.

Accommodation: Riomaggiore - Meals included: 1 breakfast

Day 7 From the Cinque Terre to Portovenere in the 'Gulf of Poets' (with Palmaria)

We'll explore Riomaggiore (and buy some picnic supplies) before setting off along the last spectacular stretch of coast. This part of the coastline is almost completely without roads or villages, until Portovenere, at the very end of the peninsula, an enormously rewarding route! We first pass underneath the sanctuary of the Madonna di Montenero and then keep on paddling underneath the impressive cliffs, mostly forested, but alternated with terraces vineyards and a few colourful hamlets, suspended between the sky and the sea, and only linked to the rest of the world by a series of steep flights of stairs! We'll have a picnic on one of the small isolated beaches.

After lunch we continue towards Portovenere and enjoy more spectacular views. Arriving below the 16th Century castle above the village we may be able to catch a glimpse of the distant peaks of the Alpi Apuane,



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before passing at the 11th century church on St. Peter's Point. From here we can opt to paddle directly into the small harbour, the real heart of the village, or to make the paddling loop of the island of Palmaria. Our ultimate destination is our waterfront hotel. In any case we try to be ashore not too late to explore Portovenere, one of the most charming coastal towns in Italy (according to the New York Times one of "The 45 Places to Go"). This evening we'll watch the sunset while sampling local wine and dining on the terrace of our hotel. Later at night we can go for a last drink in the town square altogether, to say farewell to wonderful Liguria and raise our glasses to perhaps our best kayaking adventure ever.

Accommodation: Portovenere - Meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 dinner

Day 8 Departure

The tour ends in Portovenere after breakfast today (unless you booked an extension – extra days available upon request). You can easily make your own way by taxi or bus to La Spezia, to take a train from there, either back to the Cinque Terre or Portofino, or to Genova, Milan, Florence, Rome, Naples....



OUTLINE ITINERARY

Day	Itinerary & Activities		Distance	Notes
1	Arrival in S. MARGHERITA LIGURE. Introduction trip	SM. Ligure	4-8 km.	<i>several options</i>
2	Paddling from Niasca, along Portofino to San Fruttuoso	S. Fruttuoso	11 km.	-
3	Paddling to Punta Chiappa (Camogli) & return to SML	SM. Ligure	12 - 19 km.	
4	Santa Margherita Ligure - Rapallo - Sestri Levante.	Sestri Levante	22 km.	
5	Paddling from Sestri Levante to Levanto.	Levanto	26 km.	
6	Paddling the Cinque Terre: Levanto to Riomaggiore	Riomaggiore	18 km.	
7	Riomaggiore - Portovenere (optional loop of Palmaria)	Portovenere	12 (18) km.	<i>Optional loop Palmaria</i>
8	Departure from Portovenere.	-	-	



TOUR DETAILS

ACCOMMODATION & MEALS

All nights are spent in a beautiful characteristic 3 & 4-star hotels (generally our tours are 3/4-star level; we can book superior 4/5-star on request). All rooms have en-suite facilities.

Breakfast is included, in all accommodations. A number of evening meals is included, for which we have selected the best available restaurants.

Also two (picnic) lunches are included in the tour price. These we can enjoy on the beach, while on other days we'll have either a picnic lunch or a nice lunch in a restaurant on a nice beach.

INCLUSIONS

- Private English speaking tour leader for 8 days
- Professional guiding service for each activity
- Accommodation in beautiful ***/**** hotels
- Meals: 7 breakfasts, 5 dinners in fine restaurants, 1 lunch
- Welcome drink
- All private & public transfers as indicated throughout the entire itinerary
- Rental of high-quality sea kayaks
- Group equipment and technical gear for each activity
- Special activities as outlined in the day by day itinerary
- 24/24 h local assistance
- Luggage transport
- All gratuities for baggage, porters & hotel service

Not Included

- Visas & Departure taxes
- Travel Insurance
- Drinks and meals not mentioned in the itinerary
- Optional additional tours or activities
- Tips
- Items of a personal nature



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LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY / REQUIRED SKILLS

Moderate (level 3)

This tour is suitable for kayakers with a minimum of sea kayaking experience. Our helpful guides/instructors will work with you to help you learn a new sport or become more comfortable with the outdoors. The waters of the Mediterranean are usually calm, and you'll encounter only short open water crossings.

Fitness: A good standard of fitness is necessary. You should be able to paddle for up to 4 hours.

ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

Arrival:

The tour starts in SANTA MARGHERITA LIGURE, a town with a train station, very well connected with Genova, la Spezia/Pisa and all other major Italian cities by a frequent (high speed) train service.

The nearest city with an international airport is GENOVA.

A pick-up service from the train station (or other places) can be arranged on request.

Departure:

The tour ends after breakfast on day 8 in PORTOVENERE. The onward journey is most easily made by train (from La Spezia – which can easily be reached by taxi or local bus).

A taxi transfer to the La Spezia (train station), Pisa or Genova can be arranged on request.

TOUR VARIATIONS

It is possible to include some extra nights before or after your tour, in any of the accommodations 'en route'. For those who love hiking too, a few extra days in the Cinque Terre are strongly recommended.

At the beginning or the end of the tour there is also the opportunity to visit Genova (a unique city) and/or Pisa, Lucca and Florence. The tour can easily be extended with a few days here. Also an extra night in Portovenere is strongly recommended. Details & prices on request.

UPGRADE

On our 'standard tours' we provide accommodation in very good, mostly 4-star hotels, with the best possible price/quality ration. On some dates however it is possible to book a slightly cheaper version of this tour, staying in more luxurious 4- or 5-star hotels. Please ask us for details.

SHORTER & LONGER VERSIONS

Two shorter versions of this tour are also available, covering either the Portofino Peninsula or only the Cinque Terre. See also our other Kayaking tours !

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