

Day Tripping, to the Cinque Terre by Norma Jean Bishop

The Cinque Terre have all the allure of the Tuscan archipelago – rainbow-coloured buildings tucked into cliffs, valleys sloping down to crystalline Mediterranean water where rocks and fish sliver the light as small boats pass disturbing the sun's watery mirror, a sometimes rickety, always convivial wooden table for dining al fresco (plates of pasta heaping with shellfish or Ligurian pesto, sumptuous fish fresh from the sea, a bottle of white wine, lemon *sorbetto* followed by an *espresso*...).

For those who fear the sea or get sick as soon as they step foot onto a boat, the Cinque Terre have another quality – accessibility. From Lucca they can easily be reached by car or train, and make a perfect one-day excursion.

Going by car, I recommend heading for Monterosso's large car park, where buses will shuttle you down to the village, or you can enjoy the short stroll after the one-hour drive from Lucca. If you plan to walk the four to five hour coastal trail linking the five villages, be sure to arrive with comfortable walking shoes, a sunhat, lotion and plenty of water. A group of friends can easily split up, with some people trekking and some taking the local train which runs frequently between the villages, to meet at the southernmost village, Riomaggiore, or one of the others in between – Vernazza, Corniglia or Manarola – then take the train back to Monterosso. There are nice beaches everywhere, although Corniglia



chilled white wine and some plastic cups to make friends with fellow passengers and practice language skills!

Limited to one day, you will probably want to leave the train at Riomaggiore, walk down to the waterfront and enjoy the view from a terrace while eating at one of the excellent restaurants. Or grab a gelato and head for the *Sentiero del Amore*. Leading to Manarola, this is the last section of the N. 2 trail, sheltered and safe and accessible to anyone. The breathtaking views of evanescent air and sea are just as good here as anywhere else in the Cinque Terre.

is on a cliff-top high above the sea. Monterosso has the largest beach, so a dip before and after the hike might be a good idea.

And then there is shopping – for airy and colorful summer dresses, for trendy sunglasses, dangerously delicious sun-in-a-bottle *limoncello*, or children's delights such as beach toys and shell confections. (Do remind the children that nature's wonders are to be enjoyed with eyes and ears and nose. Taking souvenirs means there won't be much left for future visitors.)

For me the train ride is its own reward. Such a pleasure, especially after making the required change at La Spezia, that one might want to take it all the way up the coast to France, enjoying the glimpses of sun-splashed sea when the train makes a bend or emerges from a tunnel, and searching for whales or dolphins when longer seascapes come into view. Bring along a bottle of

Finally, there is the approach from the water, usually from La Spezia or Lerici, though in the summer (not including mid-August) there are boats from Viareggio that stop for 3 hours in Monterosso and 1 hour in Portovenere.

In 1822 the Romantic poet Percy Shelley left Lerici in a little boat and drowned with his friend's poems in his pocket. Nowadays the safe, comfortable and serviceable ferryboats offer a magnificent entrance into the tiny villages. One can cross the bay from Lerici to Portovenere, take a short break, then continue on the next boat. The last time I did this, I couldn't resist plunging into the water as soon as we reached Portovenere's pier, then drying off under the hot sun. Life doesn't get much better than this!

www.cinqueterre.it
www.navigazionegolfodeipoeti.it
www.trenitalia.com

<< home

Click here to read an article from last month: >>



Flavio Andreoni

specialized in:
 residential electrical systems
 intercoms and videophones
 automatic gates
 ground antennas
 satellite dishes

Authorized installer of TOOWAY 2,
 the new system of internet via satellite.
 With TOOWAY 2 you can navigate rapidly anywhere,
 without a fixed telephone line, both in download and
 upload, starting from 6MBPS (6 megabits/second).

Via della Boccaccia 37 Vorno (Lucca)
 cellulare 348 3168399
 email: flavio.leone@alice.it



LUCCA TUSCANY ITALY

Your Satisfaction is Our Pleasure

Via del Ponte Guasparini, 873
 S. Lorenzo a Vaccoli 55100 Lucca
 tel +39 0583 370101 fax +39 0583 379999
www.albergovillamarta.it
 info@albergovillamarta.it

GPS - Latitude: 43.80001 NORD
 Longitude: 10.49145 EST
 Altitude: 243 ++



Holiday house rentals
 Tuscan cooking classes at your home
 Transfer service and car rentals
 Guided tours. Holiday family services



www.easytuscany.it
info@instantlucca.it
 Tel. +39 347 9029082

