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Liguria - The Italian Riviera - Land of Charm

Liguria is a crescent shaped strip of land bordered by France to the west (Montecarlo is only 15 miles from Sanremo, Nice airport is about 40 miles), Piedmont to the north, Tuscany to the east, and the Ligurian Sea to the south.

The coastal strip is very narrow and the hinterland, known as the *entroterra*, is hilly and mountainous with the ranges of the Ligurian Alps in the west, and the Apennines in the east. Liguria's highest peaks are in the west where Monte Saccarello reaches 2,200m. Numerous steep valleys penetrate the mountains and the rivers that run through them are mostly fast-flowing torrents.

Liguria has some of the most stunning coastline in the Mediterranean. The Ligurians like the simple life and the hinterland is well off the tourist track. **This is somewhere to have a truly Italian experience.**

A landscape having no in-between: the sea ahead - coasting the whole southern area of the region - and the mountains behind: two conditions which strongly influenced the gastronomic culture of the region.

One of the real wonders of Liguria is its fantastic food. This is the home of Pesto sauce, and you will never have eaten a version as tasty as the one they make here.

Fortunately, Liguria is an outdoor place so you can burn off the calories hiking along the mountain tops that offer stunning views along the coast, snorkeling and swimming in the light blue sea or cycling along the mile upon mile of coastal pathways. In the Riviera dei Fiori, from Ospedaletti to San Lorenzo al Mare you can run or bike along the wonderful Parco Costiero del Ponente Ligure, an amazing cycle path 15 miles long, on the coast, enriched with Mediterranean plants and aromas. Here you can ride on the waves, while listening to the music of the Ligurian Sea.

The cuisine of Liguria is a delicious representation of the **Mediterranean Diet** - lots of plant foods, plentiful herbs, sweet and fruity olive oil, fish and seafood, tied up beautifully in preparations that reflect local history, culture and traditions.

The villages are perched on the coast, and almost a quarter of all Italian tourism is here, attracted by the lovely beaches, the sun and the deep blue sea. Every kind of vegetable is squeezed into the thin strip between the sea and the hills, which are terraced and planted with olives, vines and fruit trees, particularly peaches apricots, oranges and lemons. Color bursts out from every corner.



Welcome To Sanremo: City of Taste and a Foodie's Paradise

Imagine a perfect and unique climate for a feeling of wellness in an international tourist resort, and, as if that wasn't enough, an explosion of colorful, tasty and healthy foods! This is the one place in the world where **what you want to eat is also good for you.**

What can be found in Sanremo? A **perfect balance between tradition, innovation, and hospitality.** Its position is reflected in a balanced variety of foods where there is no dominant ingredient: fish, and poultry, wild boar and rabbits from the hills, as well as vegetarian *sardenaira* and *torta verde*, and local fresh vegetables. **We eat what we grow!**

All the typical features of Western Ligurian cooking are represented in Sanremo's gastronomy, most of all ... a variety and a balanced mix of flavors and sensations. This is Mediterranean cooking with a dash of ingenuity and historical evolution. We can boast a perfect structure of flavors and ingredients. Sanremo's present-day restaurateurs have inherited a rich local tradition closely linked with the culture of hospitality, which has matured over the years at an international level, and encouraged a technical evolution of culinary art.

On the other hand we have fostered our most ancient traditions, some of which survive to this day. Probably the oldest ingredients are to be found in sauces. *Anchovy paste, or machetto* seems to derive from the *garum* the Romans used. This was a mixture whose decisive taste was also used in the preparation of savory tarts and breads. In fact, this is why in Sanremo we have **sardenaira** where tomatoes have replaced machetto... but please don't call it pizza... And **marò sauce** includes broad beans and mint from the vegetable garden. Yes, savory tarts and breads are among the most typical and rich part of our culture. The **panissa** and the classic **farinata** are made with the flour of the ancient chick-peas. Then there are the vegetable pies (**torta verde**), adapted to the seasons: beets, artichokes, local courgettes, or butternut pumpkins, anything can fill the soft pastry, which is tasty and sophisticated and perfect to eat anytime and in any season. These were staple foods in the past and ... well... we don't eat sandwiches for a quick snack.

The real tradition of Sanremo is to be found in the humble, but tasty dish called "*brandacujun*", made with stockfish and reminding us of the abundant importation of stockfish from Northern Europe through Provence. That's where the art of chopping up "brander" the stock and mixing it with potatoes, extra virgin olive oil and herbs was learned. Main dishes of meat include rabbit (**coniglio alla sanremasca**) a balanced mix of flavours, or Ligurian recipes such as **cima** (stuffed veal pocket).



Fillings are a recurring theme in Sanremo's cooking. During the hot months greens from the vegetable garden become main ingredients: anything can be used for a filling.

Pumpkin flowers, baby marrow (excellent to make the tasty fritters), onions... Cheese may come directly from inland, produced mainly from sheep or goats grazing in the Argentina valley (thus called because of silver mining in Roman times). Finally, **the staples of Sanremo's cooking are oil and local wines**. The oil is extra virgin made with **Taggiasca olives**, the prevailing variety used throughout the Imperia province.

This is a production of the highest quality. It can enhance flavors when raw, but it is also good for cooking - being resistant to the highest temperatures, this oil perhaps the greatest achievement of Mediterranean cooking, provides the right amount of energy, with a mellow and fruity flavor or with a more pungent flavor just after pressing.

All the dishes mentioned go well with "doc" wines from Western Liguria. For instance, Rossese from Dolceacqua, the first "doc" wine in Liguria, appropriate for tasty starters and meat dishes. Fish marries well with the white Ligurian wines, Vermentino and Pigato. Or one may choose a more recent "doc" wine: Ormeasco from Pornassio.

As can be surmised, Sanremo's food offers such variety to be able to satisfy every foodie's wish. Last but not least is our unique, scrumptious, small cake called "**Bacio di Sanremo**". You have to try it to believe it!

Join us anytime and we will delight you!

Taste Local Specialties

SANREMO FOOD TOUR

Authentic Ligurian street food and Sanremo's Medieval town

Discover the hidden historical and cultural sights and surprises that make this more than "just a food tour".

From historical buildings to works of art in the various churches, you will find it lovely to wander aimlessly down the narrow alleyways called "caruggi", with small patches of blue sky showing above ancient houses and deep arches.

The guided tour will be led by a **licensed tourist guide** who will show you the hidden gems of Sanremo's **Medieval village**, called "la Pigna" (the pinecone, after its shape). La "Pigna" is so charming and authentic, really off the beaten track.



On our 3-hour walking food tour through the characteristic narrow alleyways of the **Medieval village** you'll also visit the **fruit and vegetable market**, an outburst of colors and flavors, and you'll get to taste what makes **Ligurian street food** so special and unique: focaccia, sardenaira – a sort of local pizza slice, torta di verdura, and focaccia with cheese. Our expert will explain to you the ancient Ligurian recipes that our “nonnas” (grandmothers) wrote on the family cookbooks, and you'll taste bakery specialties with locals, pairing them with 2 local DOC wines.

You'll also discover the local “green gold”, the **extra-virgin olive oil DOP Riviera Ligure – Riviera dei Fiori** (i.e. PDO, protected designation of origin), and the **Taggiasca olive**, the queen among olives.

All this is within walking distance ... and the street food is to die for!!!

Experience highlights:

- **11 food & wine tastings (walking itinerary – several stops).**
- The finest Ligurian street food from vendors who have been feeding locals for generations.
- **Discover off-the-beaten track**, away from the tourist crowds;
- Visit of the Sanremo fruit and vegetables market;
- **Guided tour of the Medieval village, called “la Pigna”, led by licensed tourist guide.**

Enchanting Medieval Villages

CERVO

One of Italy's most beautiful villages. A place of romance.

There are a few places whose beauty touches your heart and your soul before it is perceived by your eyes. **Cervo** is one of those places, and it is one of Italy's most beautiful villages. Perched on a steep hill overlooking the sea, it retains a delicious air of romance, and it is simply enchanting with a maze of cozy alleys and ancient Ligurian squares overlooking the intense blue sea.

The historic centre is a pedestrian area where you can admire old *palazzos*, cobbled alleyways, craftsmen and artist workshops. The baroque **Church of San Giovanni Battista** – also called Church of the “**Corallini**” – is beautiful and majestic, dominating the village and the sea.



The hills around Cervo are a vibrant green. Beyond the village, around the ruins of past centuries, you can admire a backdrop of green hills covered by olive trees and quiet paths immersed in Nature.

If you are looking for a cozy village where life is peaceful and romance is in the air, Cervo is the right choice!

APRICALE & DOLCEACQUA

Two charming gems of the Italian Riviera

The **Val Nervia** is an absolute must-see place of the Riviera dei Fiori. It is one of the loveliest parts of Liguria's hinterland. This is the domain of one of the finest Italian wines which is gaining popularity and is in great demand worldwide: Rossese di Dolceacqua or Dolceacqua, a ruby red wine.

If you love the calm of the stone villages of the Ligurian hinterland, you must visit **Apricale**, a little medieval jewel in Val Nervia. The village takes its name from the Latin apricus, meaning "sunny". Many of the buildings date from the 11th century and the town hosts theatrical events in summer. In the morning you will enjoy the guided tour of Apricale – led by a licensed tourist guide. You will fall in love with the unique charm, and the Mediterranean scents and tastes of this enchanting village, loved by painters and poets.

As we are in the Nervia Valley, we cannot miss visiting **Dolceacqua**, a medieval village dominated by the imposing ruin of the Castello dei Doria which towers over the old town on the left bank of the river. Dominated by the historical castle, Dolceacqua is the ancient village, which the Impressionist painter Claude Monet immortalized on canvas. "The place is superb, there is a bridge that is a jewel of lightness", he wrote in his diary. The thing to do here is to sit in a café in the square in the old town and simply enjoy the view, which the Impressionist painter Claude Monet immortalized on canvas.

BADALUCCO AND MONTALTO

Two gorgeous Medieval villages where traditions live on, full of life

In the big cities, all is standardized to satisfy modern life, but in the villages a love of the past and the desire to hold on to true traditions are still strong. Even the food and flavors are protected and



conserved, as genuine as in days gone by, contrasting with all modern standardization. Here, in the Valle Argentina, respect for traditions means, first and foremost, Quality of Life.

Upriver from Taggia, the Argentina valley meanders between the hills of olive trees and holm oaks up to Medieval Badalucco, situated on a bend in the river, and overlooked by a hill and the terrace of Palazzo Boeri. Its small lanes are an open gallery of murals and colorful ceramics. It's a tiny little village with old people sitting about on stone benches in the sunshine, and a lot of young people still living and working here. Badalucco is a good place to stop, taste good food, and enjoy relaxation, art, and Nature.

Higher up overlooking the valley we find Montalto. Its houses lined up along a crest, its Medieval appearance still intact. In this village you will feel like walking in the past. There is a lovely baroque parish church, housing unique artworks, and the country church of San Giorgio, with 14th century frescoes. The Loggia degli Sposi (Honeymoon Lodge) creates a romantic corner among the houses and the cobbled streets overlooking the valley and the olive groves.

The typical dish of Montalto is the "frandura", and you can taste this tasty specialty only in this cozy village full of charm and authenticity.

In At the end of the tour we will visit a local oil mill where we taste the local "green gold", the extra-virgin olive oil DOP Riviera Ligure – Riviera dei Fiori (i.e. PDO, protected designation of origin), and the Taggiasca olive, the queen among olives. Our local expert will illustrate the features of extra virgin olive oil DOP Riviera Ligure Riviera dei Fiori and you will enjoy an in-depth guided oil tasting.

Italian Cooking Experience

Prepare scrumptious dishes & experience life with the sun at your table

Everywhere in the world they say "in Italy one eats well". Many are aware of Italian Food Culture and of the Mediterranean lifestyle. In Liguria we have all of this: we eat Italian, but with a Mediterranean style. This means simplicity, authenticity, freshness, imagination, exchanges in food cultures and variety. Variety means that there is no single prevailing ingredient: fish or meat, particularly white meats, vegetables and fruit, cereals and pasta, legumes and more, tied together by the universal symbols: extra virgin olive oil and wine. When you get here, you'll learn, have fun, and after attending our courses you'll have acquired something, which no one can ever take from you: how to prepare scrumptious dishes, naturally, but you will also know how to experience life with the sun at your table.



Pesto Sauce

Pesto, the perfumed green sauce that is now used around the world, is the most Ligurian of all sauces. Nowhere does it taste better than in Liguria, because we still cook Pesto sauce taking extraordinary care in gathering the ingredients and in making the sauce.

There is no single, definitive preparation for pesto. It varies a bit from town to town in Liguria, just like a dialect. Even within a town there will be differences in how pesto is made. Every single pesto that you will ever taste is unique because the ingredients used will differ as will the skill and preferences of the person making the sauce. Even if you were to give two cooks equal amounts of basil, olive oil, pine nuts, garlic and cheese from the same sources, the results will not be the same because of the hand and eye of the person who makes the pesto.

Pesto sauce is a tasty, healthy and High Quality Ligurian food.

PESTO & LIGURIAN FRESH PASTA COOKING CLASS

An unforgettable full immersion in the Ligurian culinary tradition

A full immersion in the Ligurian culinary tradition. Meet our Agri-Chef in the morning or in the afternoon and discover the authentic recipe of Pesto sauce, the valued condiment to *minestrone* and pasta dishes. After choosing the right ingredients, our Chef will teach you how to prepare a deliciously aromatic **Pesto sauce** made exclusively with local basil and prepared in the traditional way - using a marble mortar and a wooden pestle.

Discover the secret of Ligurian fresh pasta, and enjoy an unforgettable cooking class with our expert, who will teach you how to prepare "**picagge**", "**mandilli de saea**" (silk handkerchiefs), and "**corzetti**", "**trofie**" or "**parpaiui**" - typical Ligurian fresh pasta with very particular shapes.

Picnic In The Vineyard

Nature, health and good wine

The coastal strip known as the **Italian Riviera** is a land full of charm for many aspects, but because of its terrain, it is not always easy to cultivate agriculture. Agriculture in Liguria can be in fact defined, in many areas of this region, as heroic. Vineyards are cultivated in steep slopes, most of the times with no road access or paths, therefore the only way to get there is on foot. In these



areas harvesting is strictly done by hand and the grape is transported outside the vineyard by grape-pickers holding baskets on their shoulders. Despite that this could be seen as romantic and charming, as a matter of fact, this is the only way - a forced way - to cultivate and harvest grapes in certain areas of Liguria.

So Liguria is a unique region on the Italian wine production scene due to its distinctive geographic features. Vineyards exposed to the sea breeze, most of the times cultivated in the slopes degrading down the sea, produce wines with an absolutely personal touch and particular "saltiness", hardly found in wines produced somewhere else.

The best way to enjoy Ligurian wines is to walk among the rows of vineyards, and enjoy a relaxed afternoon immersed in nature, tasting local wines with farmers. You'll breathe a sense of well-being and relaxation, and enjoy the authentic "Dolce Vita" in the Italian way...

The "Taggiasca": A Queen Among Olives

The oil production from Riviera dei Fiori is derived from one type of olive *cultivar*. The olive groves, found at an altitude between sea level and 600 metres, give a good yield, starting in November and continuing throughout winter. The *cultivar* produces a fruit which, when mature, is a purple black color. In the Riviera dei Fiori, the olives are preserved in brine to be used for table consumption and for the preparation of some Ligurian dishes such as "Sardenaira" (a local pizza slice), Focaccia, Liguria style rabbit, olive paste and numerous others, and naturally it is also made into traditional top-quality oil. This oil has a golden light straw yellow color with a pleasant fruity taste in freshly squeezed extra virgin oils; delicate with a hint of sweetness. Its unique and smooth taste makes it an ideal accompaniment to Mediterranean and fish dishes. Extra-virgin olive oil of the Taggiasca variety is a "good", saturated and necessary fat, and it ensures vitamin absorption. It is highly digestible and is rich in "good" cholesterol, thus it protects against atherosclerosis.

GOURMET TREKKING EXPERIENCE

Fancy a walk? Discover Ligurian's biggest treks with us!

A pair of boots, a backpack, food and some supplies is all you need to start your trekking adventure on the Italian Riviera.



For all levels of hikers: athletes can conquer long trails, while others can trek to their own rhythm on shorter paths. In the Italian Riviera you can find circuits suitable both for experts and families. Enjoy nature, history and local hospitality on the Italian Riviera!

Trails run through ancient forests, where the scent of olive trees and chestnuts fills the air; continue between green meadows with panoramic vistas of Ligurian medieval villages and our wonderful valleys.

Staggering scenery, well-maintained paths, and cozy mountain huts: step this way, ladies and gentlemen, for the trek of a lifetime!

Visit www.sanremoexperience.com for more information.