

MEDITERRANEAN

Ligurian Coast & Cinque Terre Kayak & Walk

Kayak / Walk Adventure
Nine day itinerary



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The region of Liguria is located in Northern Italy, fitting snugly between the Alps and Apennine mountains and the Ligurian Sea. Travelling the Ligurian coast by kayak and foot is a fantastic way to explore the picturesque jumble of colourful fishing villages, vine terraced cliffs and stunning sea vistas often not accessible by vehicle. Exploring Liguria under our own steam will give an intimate insight into the region and time to appreciate la dolce vita!

Italy has the greatest number of UNESCO World Heritage sites and we're lucky to visit two on our itinerary: Genoa's historic centre and the Cinque Terre villages including the town of Portovenere. Unlike most travellers, we'll have the added pleasure of viewing the Cinque Terre villages from our kayaks!

Our trip starts in the maritime capitol of Genoa, (Genova in Italian), a vibrant port with a maze of medieval passage-ways. In Genoa, we tour the old town and enjoy our first group dinner. The next day sees the start of our paddling itinerary along the Italian Riviera and towards the Cinque Terre National Park. We paddle an average of 15kms per day, taking time out to explore the coastline, enjoy picnic lunches and stretch out on the beaches with an afternoon gelato.

We'll aim to paddle or hike to the five Cinque Terre villages of Monterosso al Mare, Vernazza, Corniglia, Manarola and Riomaggiore: every stop a feast for the senses!

We stay in small hotels or B&B's each evening and enjoy dinner in local restaurants, sampling the regional wines and reliving the day's activities.

A Quick Itinerary

B = Breakfast • L = Lunch • D = Dinner

Day 1: Meet at the group hotel in Genoa. Trip briefing, city tour and dinner. D

Days 2-4: Paddling the Italian Riviera. Hotels. B • L • D

Days 5-6: Paddling along the Cinque Terre. Hotels. B • L • D

Day 7: Walking along the Cinque Terre coastline. Hotel. B • L • D

Day 8: Paddle to Portovenere. Hotel. B • L • D

Day 9: Breakfast and transfer to La Spezia train station or return to Genoa. B

Meeting Place and Time

We meet at our group hotel, the Best Western Hotel Porto Antico, in the old town of Genoa on Day 1. Check in is available from 2pm. You will meet your guides at the hotel for a 5pm trip briefing.

How to Get There

There are regular flights from London, European capitals and Italian cities to Genoa. Flights can be booked via airline websites, flight booking sites or through your travel agent. Genoa is a hub for trains serving the Italian Riviera and other Italian cities. Bus and ferries also service Genoa.

Paddling and Hiking Experience

It is important to recognise that the weather will greatly influence our itinerary and adjustments may be made to our proposed day to day activities.

As with most activities, the fitter you are, the more you will enjoy the trip. It's a good idea to take some regular exercise like paddling, walking, jogging, cycling or swimming ahead of the trip.

This trip is designed for people with some previous paddling experience and an interest in walking. You do not have to be an expert paddler or know how to roll. However, you should have practiced a wet exit and assisted re-entry before the trip. This can be practiced in waist deep water, with a friend's help or under tuition. We're always happy to discuss your experience and can often suggest how beginner paddlers might gain the necessary experience at home to prepare for the trip. We require all participants to complete and return our kayak experience form on booking.

The degree of difficulty of the trip will depend on the weather we encounter. The wind normally picks up along the coastline in the afternoon and causes small waves. We paddle for up to three hours per day and balance that with some spectacular walks. It is important to realise that the group will kayak at the speed of the slowest members. All participants should feel confident in swimming.

The kayaks we use are stable, easy to paddle and control. We have a mix of double and single kayaks with rudders or skegs. You will be given a thorough briefing on sea kayaking techniques with ample time to practice and familiarise yourself with your kayak.

The kayaks will be lightly loaded with your personal clothing, toiletries and items needed during the day. Extra luggage not required when paddling will be stored in the transport van.

On the walking day you'll only need to carry a daypack. You should be comfortable walking for a few hours. The terrain is hilly and can be rocky.

Proposed Itinerary

The following itinerary should be seen as an approximate guide only. Our aim is to have a real Mediterranean adventure rather than being governed by a rigid schedule. Our program may change to take advantage of opportunities as they arise, to suit local conditions and according to the preference of the group. Please note that weather conditions, breakdowns and other factors can cause alterations and delays to our itinerary.

Day 1: Meet at the Best Western Hotel Porto Antico in Genoa. The trip briefing with your guide will be held at 5pm. Your guide will give out dry-bags that you will pack for the kayaking. After the briefing, the group will explore the old town before dinner at a local restaurant.

D/BEST WESTERN HOTEL PORTO ANTICO

Day 2: We'll load our transfer van and travel from Genoa to either Bogliasco or Sori. On arrival, we'll pack the kayaks and the guides will give a kayak familiarisation and safety briefing. We will only carry with us clothes and toiletries required for two days of paddling. The transfer van with our other luggage will meet up with us on the evening of Day 3. We start paddling the Italian Riviera and enjoy the spectacular coastline. Depending on conditions, we'll try and stop for a picnic lunch en route to our destination of San Fruttuoso di Camogli, a 12-13 km paddle. San Fruttuoso di Camogli is only accessible by sea or by foot and has a charming beach and abbey. We'll unload the kayaks and walk with our luggage to our accommodation. We hope to enjoy dinner overlooking the sea tonight.

B • L • D / HOTEL ACCOMMODATION

Day 3: After breakfast and a wake-up espresso at our hotel, we'll walk down to the bay to the kayaks. We paddle to Rapallo, about 12-13kms, taking in the colourful seaside towns, including the beautiful and much-photographed Portofino. For lunch, we may be able to sample a local speciality, Focaccia di Recco, stuffed with cheese and known to be habit forming! We finish paddling in Rapallo where we meet our transfer van. Load the kayaks and van and drive for about 20 minutes to Riva Trigoso (an area of Sestri Levante). Our accommodation tonight is in a small hotel with a good restaurant.

B • L • D /HOTEL ACCOMMODATION

Day 4: We start today's paddle from the beach at Riva Trigoso. The 18km paddle to Levanto passes the seaside towns of Moneglia, Deiva Marina, Framura and Bonassola. We'll stop for our usual picnic lunch and if we're warm, a swim and, of course, our daily gelato! The town of Levanto is surrounded by pine forests, olive groves and vineyards, a lovely place for our two night stay.

B • L • D /HOTEL ACCOMMODATION (TWO NIGHTS)

Day 5: Today we paddle approximately 15kms to the first two Cinque Terre villages. Our morning paddle passes Monterosso al Mare and on to Vernazza. At Vernazza we'll enjoy lunch in the bay and then explore the town, seeking out the best views from the surrounding walls. Paddling back to Monterosso, we'll

hug the coast and cruise into secret coves. A sheltered sandy beach is a great exit point and we leave the kayaks and return by train to Levanto.

B • L • D / HOTEL

Day 6: Weather permitting, we aim to paddle the length of the Cinque Terre coastline, around 12 kms. We start in Monterosso and slide past Vernazza and Corniglia to Manarola, where we picnic on the terraces high above the village. After lunch we strike out to Riomaggiore, the fifth Cinque Terre village. We then head back to Corniglia, which is perched on a small cape, 100 metres above the sea. We'll leave the kayaks on shore and climb the old stairs to the town. Corniglia is an ancient Roman village with interesting architecture and magnificent views. We have time to explore this delightful town before dinner.

B • L • D / HOTEL (TWO NIGHTS)

Day 7: Today we re-trace our kayak paddles by foot and head to the Cinque Terre villages of Manarola and Riomaggiore. The walk from Corniglia to Manarola is about 3 kms and then another 1.5 kilometres to Riomaggiore. The walk is graded easy. The path from Manarola to Riomaggiore winds around the coast on rocks overhanging the sea, a spectacular sight! We return to Corniglia and our hotel in the afternoon.

B • L • D / HOTEL

Day 8: After breakfast and a pack-up, we walk down from our hotel to the shore and our kayaks. Weather permitting, we paddle the 15kms to Portovenere, following our previous walking route to Manarola and Riomaggiore. Portovenere is a UNESCO World Heritage site and the brightly coloured houses, narrow medieval streets and castle are well worth exploring. Accommodation tonight is in an apartment-style hotel.

B • L • D / HOTEL

Day 9: The trip concludes after breakfast with either a transfer to La Spezia train station or to Genoa.

B/END OF TRIP ARRANGEMENTS

End of trip

The trip finishes with a morning transfer from Portovenere to the train station at La Spezia, about a half hour journey. Please allow enough time on this day if you are booking onward travel. A transfer back to Genoa is also possible.

Accommodation

We will have simple twin-share bed and breakfast accommodation in Genoa, San Fruttuoso Camogli, Sestri Levante Riva Trigoso, Levanto, Corniglia and Portovenere. Single rooms may be requested for an additional charge.

Climate

The climate of the Ligurian coast is generally mild. The average temperature in October ranges from a minimum of 11C to a maximum of 21C. Rainfall can occur, but showers are generally brief in duration. The sea temperature is an average of 19C.



Trip Organisation

Paddling segment

Our paddling days will start after breakfast and espresso, never too early in Italy! It's a good idea to pack your dry-bag before breakfast and prepare your personal items for the day so that loading for departure can be organised. You will need to carry clothing and toiletries required for the days when our luggage van does not meet us.

Walking Segment

All you need to carry is a daypack with all the items you require during the walk, including a rain jacket and warm sweater or pile jacket in case it gets cool or showery. Your guide will organise lunch or we will stop en-route to shop for picnic items.

Food

Meals are a highlight on this trip. We'll enjoy the local produce that the Ligurian coast is famous for, sampling olive oil, seafood and wines. Breakfasts are provided by our accommodation. Lunches are included in the trip cost and are picnic-style (focaccia/vegetable pies/gelato) and not sit-down restaurant meals. Dinners are sit down and restaurant quality and usually at our accommodation.

We are happy to cater for vegetarians and other special dietary requirements but it is important to let us know at the time of booking.

****Alcohol is not included in the trip cost. A group "kitty" for alcohol can be useful but this is up to participants to organise.**

Expedition Staff

Your guide/s will accompany you on the entire trip. Should you have any inquiries during the trip, feel free to ask your guide.

Conservation

It has always been our motto that "we take only photographs and leave only footprints". We are keenly aware of the ecology of the areas we visit and try to limit our impact on them. We ask that each person takes out everything they bring in including sweet wrappers, batteries, etc.

Photography

We are paddling in a salt-water environment and the delicate electronics in digital cameras can be damaged. You might consider a waterproof camera or a small plastic waterproof case or dry-bag with a supply of silicon packs. Ensure you have sufficient memory storage and batteries for a digital camera and charger with euro two plug converter. One variable lens will reduce your load and the amount of your equipment that can be damaged. If you are buying a new camera, consider a waterproof one and get it well before departure so you can practice with it.

Travel Arrangements

Should you voluntarily decide to alter your travel arrangements after commencement of your trip, Southern Sea Ventures is not responsible for any additional charges involved. Our staff will assist you if possible but you are responsible for organising these arrangements yourself. Delays may occur due to weather or transport difficulties and Southern Sea Ventures will do its best to rectify the situation. We are sure you will appreciate this and accept it as part of the whole Italian experience.

Travel Insurance

It is necessary to take out a personal insurance policy to cover yourself against sickness, accident, loss of baggage, trip cancellation due to weather or other reasons and in the unlikely event that you need emergency evacuation by plane or helicopter due to illness or accident. Ensure you have read the policy thoroughly and are familiar with the claim process in case it becomes necessary to make an emergency claim. We will require proof of your insurance prior to departure.

Money Matters

Your tour cost includes:

- Bed and breakfast accommodation in all hotels/B&B's (twin share).
- Luggage transfer between accommodation as per itinerary.
- Expedition kayaks, paddles, sprayskirts and life jackets.
- Watertight dry-bags for your personal gear while kayaking.
- Professional guides.
- All meals from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 9.
- Entrance fees to parks.
- Train tickets if transfers are required in Cinque Terre.
- Transfer to La Spezia or Genoa at the conclusion of the trip.
- Group first aid kit.

Your tour cost *does not* include:

- Any flights and airport taxes.
- Entry fees into historic sites or museums.
- Items of a personal nature such as WIFI charges and laundry.
- Alcoholic beverages.
- Single room hotel supplement.
- Travel insurance.
- Tips.

Money to Bring With You

There are ATM machines in the main centres and this is the most efficient way to obtain euros. Credit cards or debit cards are accepted in larger stores or hotels but don't rely on being able to use one everywhere. Cash can be changed at banks in the larger towns and cities but it can take time.

During the trip you will need money for extra bottled water, soft drinks and alcohol, entry fees to a few historical sites and any shopping you intend to do.



Passport

Make sure that you have a valid passport and that its validity will extend to six months after the date of your return.

Visas

Australian, Canadian, New Zealand, UK and US passport holders currently do not require a visa for Italy for stays up to 90 days in length. For other nationalities, please check with your nearest Italian consulate.

Excess Luggage

Luggage not required while kayaking will be transferred between hotels. However, there will be no transfer on Day 2. Therefore, you need to pack clothes and personal items for two days in your kayak. We stay two nights at the same hotel in Corniglia, meaning a daypack is all that is required during the day's walk.

Security

Before leaving home, photocopy your passport, ticket details and make a note of your credit card and ATM card numbers in case you lose or misplace them. All passports, airline vouchers, valuables, excess cash and travellers cheques are better carried with you in a dry bag in your kayak. Theft is a consideration in Italy (like at home) so it's always a good idea not to leave things unattended. Do not carry large amounts of cash with you and always be aware of what you are carrying, especially personal valuables like cameras, jewellery and watches. Do not display valuable items or leave them lying around in such a way that might tempt a thief. It is a good idea to use a money belt or neck wallet.

Medical Matters

All participants are required to provide us with a medical questionnaire filled out completely and accurately. For all those aged 65 years or over, a doctor's certificate clearing you for the trip is required. Please check with your doctor or medical centre whether you require any vaccinations or boosters.

Medical Supplies

On our trips we carry a comprehensive medical kit. However, it is your responsibility to bring sufficient quantities of any specific medications you require and a personal first aid kit. In addition we suggest that each passenger bring:

- Sun screen (water resistant variety at least SP30)
- Lip protectant
- Band-aid strips
- Insect repellent
- A mild anti-nausea drug if you are concerned about sea sickness

Equipment & Clothing: What You Need to Bring

Carefully check through all essential items. The dress code overall is casual but you may like to pack one set of smarter clothes for some dinners.

Gear List**Essential Items:**

The following checklist is a guideline for your trip. Contact us if you have any questions.

- A wide brimmed hat for protection from the sun is essential. Visors are inadequate. A hat with a stiff brim that will hold rigid in a breeze, e.g. straw hat with a strap to put under your chin is good. A scarf made from a light material like silk to protect your neck can be useful too.
- Sun-glasses with a cord to prevent them from falling into the water. Side flaps are a good idea, in particular the type that can be added to conventional sun-glasses by slipping them onto the arms.
- Light weight rain jacket or spray jacket.
- One long sleeve thermal or polyester top. This is highly recommended for sun protection while paddling. Cotton is not very suitable for paddling as it gets stiff with salt and can irritate the skin. Lycra rash vest is also suitable.
- Two or three T-shirts or short sleeved shirts.
- One pair of light-weight, quick drying trousers.
- Two pairs of paddling shorts and swimwear.
- Light-weight fleece jacket (not a heavy jacket), i.e. Polartec 100 is sufficient, or a sweatshirt.
- One pair of comfortable hotel/town shoes and one pair of comfortable walking shoes or lightweight hiking boots.
- Reef shoes for paddling or a good fitting pair of sports sandals that attach solidly.
- Lightweight socks.
- Kayak cag or paddling jacket is highly recommended.
- Minimal toiletries.
- Lightweight rain pants (optional).

- One pair of light thermal leggings/thermal long underwear.
- One or two 1-litre water bottles—the type used by cyclists are fine and inexpensive.
- A small dry bag is good for holding things like sun screen, glasses, water bottle, etc.
- Lightweight cycling gloves can ease blistering if you are not used to paddling.
- Good waterproof sun cream and lip balm.
- Small daypack.

Optional items:

- Camera. If your camera is not waterproof, bring a waterproof container .
- Power points require a plug with two round pins (these will fit in the three vertical round pin sockets seen in some hotels.) Voltage is 220V AC.
- Book.

Delays or Problems

In case of last minute delays or problems, contact Southern Sea Ventures in Australia on +61 2 8901 3287. Your guides' Italian contact number will be noted on your final itinerary.

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