

## Via Genoa & La Spezia

### Accessible Cinque Terre



**T**he area of Cinque Terre (meaning Five Lands and also spelt Cinqueterre) is located in Liguria between Genoa and La Spezia balancing precariously on the last fingertips of land jutting into the sea.

Cinque Terre takes its name from five small villages Corniglia, Manarola, Monterosso al Mare, Riomaggiore and Vernazza which all cling to the rugged Ligurian coastline. They are practically inaccessible by land due to the steep terrain and the best way to visit them is to take the train that runs between them hopping on and off as you go. Another way of seeing the towns is to hike across the many trails, through vineyards and rocky outcrops.

Each town has something different.

Monterosso has a beach, a 16<sup>th</sup> century Capuchin monastery with famous paintings by van Dyke, Cambiaso and Piola and a castle. Vernazza (pictured), an ancient Roman port, is dominated by a Round Tower and medieval fortifications whilst Riomaggiore is awash with old pastel-coloured houses which tumble down the hillside into a curved dock.

Famed for its vineyards and olive groves, Corniglia is the only village not by the sea although it can be reached by steps. A working fishing village, Manarola offers swimming off the rocks and an old baroque church of San Lorenzo. The small medieval village of Portovenere, situated at the far west of the Gulf is considered the sixth village of the famous Cinque Terre.

Sampling local Ligurian cuisine is imperative during any visit to this area. With grapevines and olive trees covering the hillsides, wine and oil are a must for the table. They accompany the salted anchovies of Monterosso perfectly, as well as the many specialty fish dishes from the region. Try troffie a kind of pasta made from chestnut or wheat flour together with pesto, an original Ligurian sauce; vegetable pies prepared with stuffing containing borage and other local herbs, together with artichokes, zucchini, potatoes, leeks, eggs and ricotta cheese; or cotoletta di acciuga, anchovies stuffed with a breadcrumb based filling and fried. Other seafood specialties include sardine fritters, stewed

cuttlefish and spiced octopus.

Cinque Terre is famous for its dry white wine and Sciacchetrà dessert wine made from local grapes which grow in the terraced landscape.

This year Stazioni Marittime, manager of all the passenger terminals in the Port of Genoa organised a new excursion together with the National Railways and Cinque Terre Park, called 'Il treno per le Cinque Terre'.

The tour took 150 people including cruise line executives, tour operators, travel agents, local authorities and passengers by train and boat on an excursion which visited three of the five towns. A typical Ligurian lunch was also presented on a plaza overlooking the sea.

Participants were divided into groups to explore the local tourist attractions on offer which include: diving, horse riding and small train rides through the traditionally maintained vineyards.

The famous American travel writer Rick Steves made the Cinque Terre a very well known destination to Americans. Now, Americans (and all nationalities) can reach this piece of paradise on a cruise shore excursion.



## Via Dubrovnik

## Heaven on earth

**D**ubrovnik is situated in Southern Dalmatia, on the Adriatic coast. Rich vegetation, beautiful lakes, rare islands, white pebble beaches and the crystal clean sea, all make this region an unforgettable experience for every visitor.

The Dubrovnik region consists of numerous small 'jewels' that are worth visiting, small authentic villages, untouched islands and, of course, the Old Town of Dubrovnik, the crown jewel of them all.

While staying in Dubrovnik in 1929, George Bernard Shaw said: 'If you want to see heaven on earth, come to Dubrovnik'.

And don't forget to eat during your visit as Dubrovnik and the whole region is extremely proud of its rich native cuisine. Many restaurants prepare food in a traditional manner, following old recipes. Try local specialties like brodet from eels or frog legs in Neretva River Valley, sea oysters and other mussels in Ston, macaroni pasta from Korcula, rozata or



kontonjata in Dubrovnik, and pizzoto with green manestra in Cavtat.

Dubrovnik's city walls are amongst the finest and most complete in Europe. Surrounding the entire city, they stretch 1,940 mtr and rise up to

25mtr in height. The City Wall complex was built between the 8th and 16th century, consisting of an inner and outer section. A walk around the walls provides spectacular views of the city and the coastline.

## Via Korcula

## History, olives &amp; wine



**T**he island of Korcula, the birthplace of Marco Polo, has a rich history to reveal. It was inhabited in prehistoric times and the first Greek colonies settled on the island in 4th century BC or even earlier. The Romans were present until the fall of the Roman Empire and the Slaves inhabited the island in the eighth century.

Today, over 17,000 people live on the island with the largest concentration in the town of Korcula the historical, cultural and political centre, as well as the main port. The Korculans are skilful and respected seamen. Korcula is also a large olive-growing area, and oil produced in the traditional way – is one of the best known products of the island. Wines are also a symbol of Korcula.

## Via Split

## A Roman taste

**S**plit, the second biggest city of Croatia and fourth passenger port in the Med with more than 3m passengers a year, is an important cultural and tourist centre. The town of Split was founded in the third century by the Roman emperor Diocletian.

Split has 1,700 years tradition as a town. The city centre is situated within the walls of the world famous Diocletian's Palace – the only imperial palace from Roman times in which residents dwell (pictured) and proclaimed as part of UNESCO's

world cultural heritage. It has many ancient temples, Middle-Age mansions, sacred buildings, squares, museums, galleries as well as shops.

The port of Split, situated in the immediate vicinity of the old town centre, had 140 cruise calls this year and for 2005 will be able to accommodate the largest ships at 'summer berths' planned alongside the main breakwater.

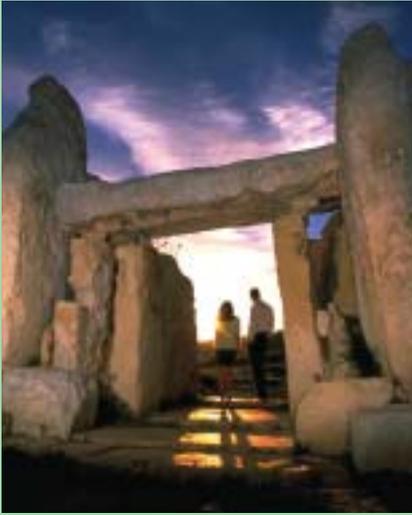
Local Dalmatian cuisine including prosciutto, sheep cheese, fish and lamb or stewed beef is a must-try for visitors plus the local red and white wines and Dalmatian prosek (prosecco) dry dessert wine.





## Via Valletta

# Journey back in time



**7,000 years ago, the island of Malta witnessed the first traces of man. A thousand years before Stonehenge, dozens of mysterious megalithic temples (pictured above) were built all over the islands.** The temples of Ggantija, Hagar Qim, Mnajdra, Tarxien and the underground Hypogeum at Hal Saflieni, are the result of a superhuman effort made over several centuries.

The magnificent pottery and finely decorated objects discovered among the debris close to the temples recall an age of peace and prosperity. These treasures form part of a

collection which makes Malta's archeological museums a key site of Mediterranean culture.

The mysterious disappearance of these highly artistic people in the second millennium was followed by waves of new settlers. There is evidence that in the Bronze Age, Malta was open to a number of new civilisations, particularly those coming from the Aegean. When the Phoenicians (9th century BC) and the Carthaginians (6th Century BC) came to Malta, the islands provided an ideal base

thanks to its many sheltered bays and natural harbours. During the Punic Wars, the islands were invaded by the Romans. Christianity on the island dates back to 60AD when the galleon carrying the Apostle Paul ran aground on the shores of Malta.

The National Museum of Archaeology in Valletta, housed in the Auberge de Provence, brings together a splendid Neolithic collection, as well as a vast array of objects found in Punic and Roman tombs.



Grand Harbour, Valletta

## Via Monaco

# Discovering Monaco's heritage



**Since the 1850's some of the world's greatest architects have left their mark in Monaco and the surrounding area. Charles Garnier designed the Monte-Carlo Casino whilst Gustave Eiffel built a sumptuous villa in Beaulieu and also**

**contributed to the Winter garden at the Hotel Hermitage. Visitors follow in their footsteps whilst strolling around the Principality and along the Med coast.**

Admire the classic almost baroque facades. Behind the multicoloured mosaics, one can catch

a glimpse of a bygone age. Some of the greatest names in the world of art and culture have sought inspiration in Monaco. One name that springs to mind is Le Corbusier.

Our era has seen a new passion for gardens develop and with a total surface of 195 hectares the Principality is keen to preserve its greenery amidst the advance of urbanisation. Until the 19th century there were secret gardens located in monasteries. The green revolution came in 1863 with the creation of the gardens around the Casino still in existence today.

There is also a special affection for flowers. In the Fontvieille district, a heart-shaped rose garden dedicated to Princess Grace has over 180 varieties and some 4,000 rose bushes. It was also Princess Grace's wish that a Japanese Garden would be created and here the visitor can be transported into a Far Eastern world overflowing with a thousand and one spiritual influences.

## Around Alexandria – 23rd General Assembly



**A**ttendees of the 23rd MedCruise General Assembly which took place in Alexandria, Egypt on November 4th to 5th had an opportunity to visit the tourist attractions of Alexandria, courtesy of Kadmar Travel.

The tour started with a scenic drive to Montaza Gardens and a visit to the summer palace of the former king of Egypt. Farouk Alexandria National Museum was next, followed by the catacombs of Kom elshokafa, the largest Roman cemetery in Alexandria.

Next was a visit to the Roman Amphitheatre located at Kom al-Dikkah

which was discovered in the early 1960s and has 12 semi-circular marble tiers in remarkably good condition. Finally the tour stopped at the most prominent remaining Greek landmark in Alexandria, Pompey's Pillar which stands over 25mtr high.

The evening social programme consisted of a dinner on the first night at Qait Citadel, kindly offered by the Ministry of Tourism which included a local folklore music show. A visit to Alexandria Library, followed by a dinner hosted by Moustafa El Nagaar, Chairman of Alexandria Chamber of Commerce, held at his residence, took place on November 5.

## Costa Fortuna naming – November 22nd



**C**osta Fortuna, the largest passenger ship in the history of Italian seafaring, was christened in Genoa at the Ponte dei Mille passenger terminal on the morning of November 22nd. Godmother was Sicilian actress Maria Grazia Cucinotta (above, left).

Later that evening over 2,000 guests witnessed a spectacular show entitled 'Transatlantic liners. The art of navigation in Italy' created and directed by Valerio Festi, followed by a gala dinner prepared by Gualtiero Marchesi.

Costa's new 105,000gt flagship will sail in the Mediterranean and Canary Islands this winter, joining Costa Europa and Costa Victoria offering a total of 6,200 lower berths, triple the number of last year. 'If stimulated, there is a strong demand for winter cruises,' Pier Luigi Foschi (above, right) Costa ceo and chairman said, adding that the ships are fine in cooler weather, with features like heated swimming pools.

'More and more, you will see Costa ships year-round in the Mediterranean,' Foschi predicted, pointing out that positioning vessels close to key source markets makes a more competitive product because it cuts out the incremental air expense.

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