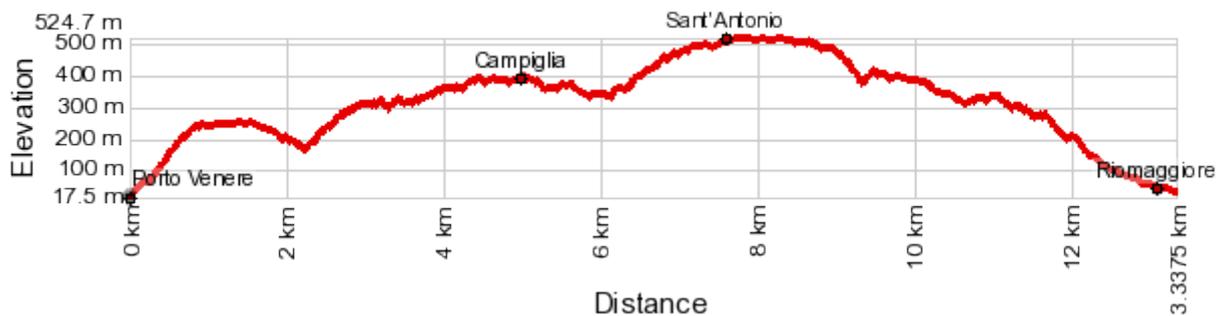




Leg 3 from Porto Venere to Riomaggiore

Total length	13,4 km
Hiking time	6h
Cumulative elevation gain	688 m
Uphill percentage	53,4 %
Downhill percentage	46,6 %
Percentage of hike on natural earth	59,9 %
Percentage of hike on asphalt	16,2 %
Percentage of hike on paved surface	23,9 %
Percentage of hike on other surface	0 %

Profilo altimetrico



General description:

Leg of great interest in terms of landscape and nature. Porto Venere can be reached by boat (in the tourist season) or by bus from La Spezia. The route from Porto Venere to Riomaggiore is quite challenging and strenuous in the first part, but the effort will be rewarded by the beauty of the landscape of the Unesco World Heritage Site of Portovenere, Cinque Terre and the Islands (Palmaria, Tino and Tinetto). The steep limestone cliffs, plunging deeply into the sea, gradually give space to the famous terraces. The itinerary passes through Campiglia and short detours allow to reach the hamlets of Schiara and Monesteroli by breathtaking stairways. The descend to Riomaggiore deserves a stop at the Madonna di Montenero Sanctuary with its beautiful panoramic balcony over the entire Cinque Terre coast.



Description of the itinerary

Porto Venere is probably the place in Italy that more than others evokes the concept of Pillars of Hercules: a kind of “finis terrae”; an ideal starting point for a journey across the Ligurian arch. The trailhead can be found in Piazzetta Bastreri, on the right side of the medieval city door. In its first part this itinerary tracks the Alta Via del Golfo (AVG – High Trail of the Gulf) as well as the Alta Via delle Cinque Terre (AV5T – Cinque Terre High Trail). You will climb along the city walls and the walls of Castle Doria. These imposing walls are perfectly integrated into the severe and wild nature: the steep cliffs of the Muzzerone Promontory (with its astonishing clung Aleppo pines), the sea and the Ampelodesmos plumes constantly wiped by the wind. The big squared rock blocks testify the past quarrying activity.

Continue uphill along the steep ridge, between the colours and the scents of the Mediterranean scrubland. Pine trees and holm oaks, that escaped the fires during the last decennia, provide relief with their shade. Mastic, tree spurge, curry plant, Montpellier cistus, myrtle, common broom, are just some of the many shrubs and bushes that you will encounter along the way.

Go on maintaining the same altitude, following the AVG trail, without climbing up to the top of the Muzzerone Mount (which can be reached with the trail marked with n°416). The Sentiero Liguria flanks the promontory on its inner slope. On the Gulf side you can enjoy a beautiful view over the inlets and the promontories of the so called “Coast of the Pirates”: Panigaglia, Le Grazie, Varignano, Punta Castagna.

Take the dirt road to Sella Derbi where you abandon the AVG trail (which continues along the inner slope facing the Gulf), to continue on the coastal trail (marked AV5T). This is one of the most spectacular sections, passing high on the cliffs and through the Mediterranean scrubland: this is the realm of the pilgrim falcon, as well as of the common raven, of the blue rock thrush and the crag martin, of the kestrel and the common buzzard.

You will soon reach Campiglia, small village on the ridge, that seems to be in the middle of two worlds: the cool forested slope facing the Gulf and the sunny, terraced slope of Tramonti, running out to the sea. Campiglia is an important hiking crossroad: here you have the intersection of the mule track climbing up from Acquasanta-Marola with the one arriving from Biassa (marked AVG); from here departs even the amazing staircase of Persico, which allows to reach the sea through the narrow vineyards. Continuing northwards, as an alternative to the AV5T trail running along the ridge, the Sentiero Liguria descends to the midline of the slope of Tramonti, gorgeous scenic balcony on the hamlets of Monesteroli and Schiara (trail marked with n°535).

Once at the Fontana di Nozzano, the trail becomes a beautiful staircase (marked with n°504) that climbs to the ridge, through holm oak and maritime pine forests. At the Pass of Sant’Antonio you will cross the variant 3v to La Spezia.

Walking on the watershed you will soon reach the Telegrafo Pass, where the trail intersects the road. Here you abandon the ridge trail (AV5T) to follow the trail named Sentiero Verde Azzurro (SVA - Green Blue Trail) to Riomaggiore. Descend gently towards the sea until the Sanctuary of Montenero. The scenic overlook in front of the Sanctuary allows you to enjoy a gorgeous view of the Cinque Terre. The grandiose sandstone staircase (called “Via Grande”), descending to the village, testifies the devotion of the inhabitants of Riomaggiore to their Sanctuary.