



Leg 8 from Sestri Levante to Zoagli

Total length	17 km
Hiking time	6h
Cumulative elevation gain	568 m
Uphill percentage	38 %
Downhill percentage	36 %
Percentage of hike on natural earth	18 %
Percentage of hike on asphalt	49 %
Percentage of hike on paved surface	33%
Percentage of hike on other surface	

Profilo altimetrico



General description:

The leg runs through the municipalities of Sestri Levante, Lavagna, Chiavari and Zoagli, with rich and varied landscapes: from the Mediterranean scrubland to farmed land, from the riverine environment of the Natural Oasis of the Entella River to the alleys of Chiavari, from the old pine tree groves to the steep over the sea hanging rocky cliffs. A long up and down along the ancient road connects the hamlets of the Eastern Tigullio.



Description of the itinerary

Sure enough the old “Segesta Tigulliorium” was a *positio*, an ancient Roman port, even if the origin of the settlement in the area might have been more ancient.

The old communication routes followed the mountain ridges, far from the coast, but in Sestri Levante they reached the sea, before running up again the slopes towards Lavagna and Chiavari.

You will find the trailhead in Pietra Calante, at the far west end of the Plain of Sestri, under the spur of Mount Capenardo, next to the small Chapel of San Sebastiano and on the front of sandstone quarry, now a camping field.

The route comes to a fork. On the left, an old steep paved path leads straight up to the remains of the Church of Sant’Anna. The right branch is less steep, and follows the old “bridges path” (built by the Republic of Genova during the XVIII) that, following a small stream, enters the Fico Valley before joining the straight variant at the intersection with the trail to the Mount Capenardo.

Passed the remains of the Church of Sant’Anna, in a dominant position on a lookout, the trail continues almost flat with a gorgeous view over the Tigullio Gulf, with its blue sea and the cliffs overlooking the road and the railway. After descending and passing through Cavi Borgo, you continue circa 200 metres westwards along the Via Aurelia. Take Via Romana and walk up the stairs on the right, with the indication Santa Giulia. You will have to follow a series of “creuze” (alleys) until the Church of Santa Giulia, from where the view widens again on the Tigullio Gulf.

In old times, the first slate was quarried from Mount Santa Giulia and Mount San Giacomo, behind it. You will see different accesses to big or small quarries and signs of the working and the use of this beautiful versatile black stone.

The quarried material, foliated in big layers, was carried to the port of Lavagna, by women on their head. From Lavagna it was shipped to Genova or to other Ligurian destinations.

From the square under the Church you continue westwards descending a shirt staircase. You cross the road and descend the paved path that ends up in Via San Benedetto. The itinerary continues westwards, slightly up and down, on a not too busy road. You will pass a few houses before descending a paved path between olive groves, farmed terraces and orchards, with a beautiful view over the coast. At the end of the trail, you will see the fence of Castello Foti, in Via Monte. Turn right, slightly up and down first, before descending in Via Tedisio, from where you can easily reach the centre of Lavagna.

Lavagna is separated from Chiavari by the Entella River, that can be crossed after passing the old centre of Lavagna with the imposing Church of San Michele and the monumental cemetery that encloses the city on the North side.

Follow Via Sanguineti, Via Dante Alighieri and Via Garibaldi, walk on the cycle path along the riverside towards the mouth and cross the Entella on the first bridge.



The Maddalena Bridge, with the annexed Maddalena Sanctuary, built by Innocenzo IV Fieschi in 1210 on the place of a previous wooden bridge, has been for centuries the only save bridge over the “fiumana bella” (beautiful river) described by Dante in Canto XIX of his Purgatory.

The old centre of Chiavari is characterised by a maze of regularly intricate arcades, surrounding the old marketplace and overlooked by the old Castle located on the hill.

From the railway station of Chiavari you take Corso Buenos Aires, which you have to walk until the western end, following the signs to the camping. At the hairpin, take the trail on the right (marked with red and white dots), which climbs steep through the SCI Pineta - Lecceta di Chiavari, to the Sanctuary delle Grazie. This very interesting trail, from a naturalistic point of view, allows to appreciate a patch of old pine grove, still in good condition.

From the Sanctuary the itinerary continues westwards along the busy Via Aurelia, for a few hundred metres, until the crossroads to Sant'Andrea di Rovereto. Follow this side road to the Church of San Pietro di Rovereto. The landscape is modified by man, with beautiful houses with gardens and vegetable gardens characterised by many fruit trees, especially orange and lemon trees. From the squares in front of the two churches you can enjoy a marvellous view over the Promontory of Portofino and the coast. The squares in front of the Churches are decorated with the typical traditional paving, called “risseu”, made of polychrome pebbles used to form beautiful mosaics. The one in front of the Church of San Pietro is still in good status of preservation. From this square you continue right in front of the Church, passing between two houses before descending a short staircase to shortcut the road. Once in Via San Pietro, follow the road down to Zoagli. In the past Zoagli has been famous for silk velvet weaving (still nowadays silk velvet is woven by hand in the two remaining factories). Among the many gorgeous views you will notice the unique silhouette of the Castel of Sem Benelli, built in 1914 on behalf of the famous playwright, now divided in luxury apartments. The vegetation is characterised by an alternation of olive groves, farmed terraces and mixed woods. You will pass between houses and cross the Via Aurelia in a turn before descending the staircase to the railway station. Turning right from the railway station you will reach the main square of Zoagli, end of this leg.