



Leg 15 from Varazze to Arenzano

Total length	11,250 km
Hiking time	2h 50'
Cumulative elevation gain	zero
Uphill percentage	0%
Downhill percentage	0%
Percentage of hike on natural earth	0 %
Percentage of hike on asphalt	100 %
Percentage of hike on paved surface	0 %
Percentage of hike on other surface	19,5% through tunnels





General description:

This leg develops along a pleasant cycle path, that follows the old coastal railway track between Arenzano and Varazze, passing through Cogoleto. The path is mostly flat and runs partially in tunnels, partially outside, with gorgeous views over the sea. Here the coast is characterised by small pebble stone beaches and rocky cliffs that plunge steeply into the sea. The itinerary, that develops in the territory of Beigua Geopark, is remarkable for the geological characteristics of the area, as well as for the vegetation, and for the presence of numerous aromatic species, typical of the Mediterranean scrubland.

Description of the itinerary

The itinerary starts at the beginning of the cycle and walking path Lungomare Europa, that leads to Cogoleto, running plane on asphalt for circa 6 km.

This area is included in the Beigua Geopark and is interesting from a geological point of view. Characteristic and noteworthy is the “change in colour” of the cliffs, that can be observed between Varazze and Cogoleto. This is a contact area between two different kinds of rock: metamorphosed metagabbro rocks (white colour) and serpentines (dark colour).

After crossing the Arrestra Stream, you enter the Province of Genova. Continue eastwards along the promenade flanking the Via Aurelia. After passing through Cogoleto take again the cycle and walking path, near the mouth of the Lerone Stream and the sport field, passing under the “Pine tree grove” of Arenzano. After circa 5 km you will reach the marina and the centre of Arenzano, where this easy leg ends.

Along the route you will be able to see different plants of the Mediterranean scrubland. This kind of vegetation is characterised by drought tolerant species which rarely grow taller than 4/5 metres.

Among the most common plants we mention mastic (*Pistacia lentiscus*), strawberry tree (*Arbutus unedo*), Mediterranean buckthorn (*Rhamnus alaternus*), myrtle (*Myrtus comunis*) and sarsaparilla (*Smilax asper*). Among the trees you can admire holm oaks (*Quercus ilex*), Aleppo pines (*Pinushalepensis*) and maritime pines (*Pinus pinaster*).

The holm oak, in particular, is the best adapted plant to the Mediterranean conditions, reaching a steady state in the biological community (climax). Unfortunately, nowadays, there are no more holm oak forests worthy of the name. In fact this tree has been overexploited in the past and due to the heavy deforestation, only some isolated plants survived.

A remarkable species among the herbs is the sea fennel (*Crithmum maritimum*), a halophyte plant, able to grow in an environment with high salinity, which colonizes the steep cliffs that plunge into the sea. During the summer months you can admire its white-yellowish umbrella shaped flowers. Sea fennel is an edible plant, used in some traditional recipes.