

At two steps from the sea

Discover the Genoese Apennines



At two steps from the sea there is a green mount



“There is a beach in front of the sea, turn the page and collect the blackberries. A beautiful redhead tasting sea bass, turn the page and you are on the hill. The hill with many pathways, turn the page and you are in the Riviera.”

The desire to sing like this - paraphrasing a passage by Fabrizio De Andrè - arises when observing the Genoa landscape, with its coasts modelled by long beaches, inlaid with small ports, decorated with beach umbrellas and alive with merry voices.



Many beautiful things. Which give up their place, after a few kilometres, to the proud greenery of the inland, a fresh and relaxing world almost all year round, it is the greenery that you would never have expected, especially if, as a tourist, you are used to pass in a quick and distracted way on the motorway, towards sea-based weekends or holidays. You don't know how much you miss, hurried tourist, as it would be so easy to combine the delights of the beach with the discovery of a thriving and intact world, where traditions resist cement, nature offers unmissable glimpses and stress truly does not exist. We are not talking of an island that does not exist, but of a green reality, true and genuine. So close to the sea that you could almost kiss it.



Nature for all

When holiday in Italian was called “villeggiatura” meaning “country holiday”, the Apennines were the retreat of the Genoese who, in the hot middle of summer, left the city behind with its closeness and humidity,

An ever green world

The classic tourist, Genoese or perhaps from Lombardy, Piedmont or Emilia Romagna, arrives here, in the Genoese Apennines, and again finds - or perhaps discovers? - how intact as always it is: the



and chose to live in charming cottages, of ancient or floral style, surrounded by the green ceiling of the hills. Habits and customs have changed, “villeggiatura” turned into only a couple of weeks or a weekend, but there are still those with a house in the country.

intense green and superb uncontaminated valleys; the proud wood; the flow, at times placid and at times restless, of the water in the rivers and streams; the swish of the lake; the surprisingly jagged outline of the mountain peaks; or the stunning opening onto pasture land.



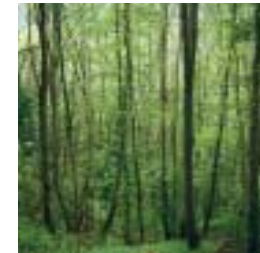
Nature and ancient wisdom

With his work, his stories and his history, man is a respectful presence here, with customs passed down by word of mouth or with the treasures of the land: in this way the mountains have given man stone for the construction of houses and roads; the ancient hamlets have followed the outline of the mountains, and

palaces and fortresses have at times taken support from the rocks, to oversee from up high the valley



here, and that only the knowledge of housewives can turn into undoubtedly delicious dishes.



checked tablecloths, or the intense fascination of an excursion, along the trails of the natural parks, important custodians of nature, in search of sceneries that are ever new to the eye.

and the passage of merchants and armies. From the forest, furniture and household objects are made, the same woods offer bountiful fruits, exquisite and natural, while cooks have treasured kitchen gardens, from which to collect the produce that grows only

Air to breathe

A world to fully appreciate, a reality to discover. Enjoy a cheerful walk, a visit to an open-air museum, a castle, an ancient hamlet; or delight in the pleasure of a typical country restaurant known as *trattoria*, the type with



The road of good food...



This is on offer at Sant'Olcese and Orero, in the upper Polcevera valley. In nearby Serra Riccò the "mostardella" was born, a salami of delicate taste and consistency, wonderful with bread. There is not only salami. The "sacripante" is a typical local creamy sweet.

Think of Genoese cuisine and the sea comes to mind. Here, however, the tastes of the land are the masters. It is enough to think of fragrant pesto sauce, delicate extra virgin olive oil, or stuffed "cima", sung about even by Fabrizio De André. *Ôdo de bôn*, smell of good food, an unsuspected gastronomical fantasy created from the richness of the woods and kitchen gardens. This explains the delicious cookery of the Genoese Apennines. There are the classic products, from mushrooms to honey, from chestnuts to hazelnuts to cheese. Delicate and slightly bitter are the latter, among which triumphs the *prescinsœua*, the fresh and unmistakable Genoese curd, and the small classic cheeses which excel in "focaccia col formaggio", first created in the hills behind Recco.

Salami and raspberries

A perfectly spicy salami, velvety and slightly smoky, the ideal companion for broad beans and fresh "pecorino" cheese.



While the prize-winning pastry shop Poldo is renowned for its Zena cream and inspired basil chocolates. Among other delights is *corzetti* pasta, with a shape and consistency ideal for collecting sauce, whether it be sumptuous meat ragu or a tasty touch of mushroom sauce, with pieces of savoury *porcini*. The valleys of Stura and Orba are known as "the valleys of milk", and offer the fresh products of the Masone cheese factory. Where the pasture land gives up space to the



woods, delicious fruit is found: bilberries, raspberries and currants. In Torrighia, in the Trebbia valley, you find the popular "canestrelli" biscuits. A typical Genoese speciality which is made particularly well here.

Oil more delicate than this

The Petronio valley, behind and at times overhanging the sea, is a land of olive trees and oil. Fine and delicate as perhaps in no other part of the world. While at Castiglione Chiavarese they make exceptional salami. There is also delicious lard, the type which melts in your mouth, a prelude to the stronger tastes of the coppa and the salami.

Green pastures

Think of Aveto, Graveglia, Sturla, and already your mouth is beginning to water. From the hills to the mountains all is a triumph of taste. Where to begin? With cheese, of course, from San Stè, which is the most typical among all the typical cheeses of Liguria. It is produced with the milk of cows of the native



Cabannina race or the Bruna race, which graze upon fields that are so well cared of that they look like gardens. Let's not forget the Sarasso, from the upper Aveto valley or, moving on to pork, the tasty coppa and the delicious salami. Special mention must go to the local, floury "quarantina" potatoes, delicious like no other with "trenette" pasta and pesto. *Dulcis in Fundo?* The pine nut cake of the Aveto valley, or the *rotelle* of

Borzonasca: the short crust, ring-shaped pastry which are to die for.

Wine and beer

Fresh wines, delicate and light, the kind that goes down well. In the Polcevera valley, with a little good fortune, you can taste the rare Coronata, of an unmistakable taste, or the doc wines Valpolcevera or igt "Valli del Genovesato", while in the upper Scrivia valley they make apple wine. Rich is the

production of the Graveglia and Sturla valleys. Here they also make Vermentino, together with the classic Bianchetta and agreeable Cilieggiolo. But it is not all



wine: for beer lovers there are true surprises in Busalla. Not to miss are the chestnut beers and those flavoured with honey.

In the order given:

Pesto Genovese and mortar. Salami accompanied by broad beans and fresh pecorino cheese. Classic canestrelli biscuits from Torrighia. Cows grazing in the Aveto valley.

Beer from Busalla. Cheese and typical products from the "milk valleys".



... and of beautiful things



In Fontanabuona a living museum in unused caves has been created, to show everyone how this precious black stone was worked. There is also an



The black stone of Liguria

There is a valley, behind



been for centuries, and continues to be today, the treasures of its subsoil.



elegant showroom exhibiting fine pieces, to admire before buying.



the Gulf of Tigullio, which promises good things with its name: it is Fontanabuona, meaning good fountain, a name that appears to be from a fairy tale or Disney comic. Fontanabuona is in fact a little bit "land of playthings" as in Gattorna there is a factory which makes hand crafted toys... If the name of the valley in reality seems to be due to the purity of its water, a sign of its destiny has

Slate: a rough black stone, of a thousand qualities and of unique quality here. In the past it was used above all for the covering of roofs, but today it is mainly used as a sheet for billiard tables. No other material, synthetic or natural, can guarantee the same slide of the balls or the correct rebound on the green cloth. Slate for furnishing and for objects, slate to use and to visit.



Damasks and bells

Fontanabuona does not only have stone at its heart. Up there, in Lorsica, is an ancient craft company where demasks and silk are woven as they were in the past, on over a hundred-year-old looms with mastery and ability passed down from generation to generation. Lower down, in Uscio, in hills looking out over the sea, you will find bells and clocks destined for the belltowers of Liguria



and beyond. Bells are also cast in the foundry of Avegno, a stone's throw away from Recco, and they can be admired in the Trebino Museum.

A filigree town

From the robust metal used for bells we move on to the fine and precious metal intertwined in Campo Ligure, in the middle of the Stura valley. This is the birthplace of filigree, produced by craftsmen like in few other places in the world. The main road of the town is a parade of craft shops and the filigree museum exhibits valuable pieces from all over the world.



The valley of mills

Craftsmanship and the culture of the countryside go hand in hand in the upper Polcevera valley. Fully functioning water mills are to be found in Cernesi and Mignanego, and the art of basket weaving is still flourishing throughout the area.

In the order given:

Fontanabuona slate is divided into slabs by the skilled blows of the spaccino or "splitter". It is also used for fancy goods and floorings. The ancient art of damask making continues in Fontanabuona and in the Tigullio area where fine cloth is produced using craft techniques.

Campo Ligure is the capital of filigree: its museum brings together beautiful jewels from all over the world.



Enjoy your walk!



Like a nativity scene

It is not always necessary to depart on demanding excursions in order to discover the best of the Genoese Apennines. With a healthy and gentle walk you can enjoy the scenery and fresh clean air, combined with moments of cultural interest, for example in the nativity scene-like village of Pentema, in the Trebbia valley, where time seems to have stood still conserving a tranquil village of huddled together stone houses. Another example, again in the Trebbia valley, is the ancient church and graveyard of Santo Stefano, in Fontanarosa di Gorreto.

The valleys of kitchen gardens

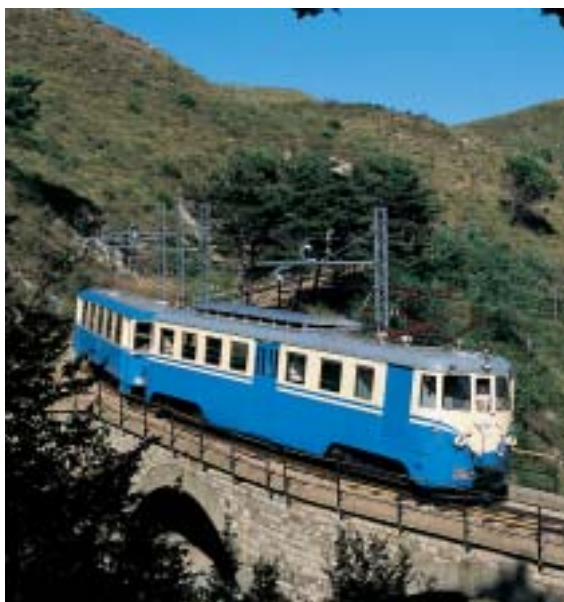
You are truly spoilt for choice. Botanical enthusiasts, for example, can opt for the mountain garden of Pratorondanino, in the Stura valley, or for the charming walk in Ciaè, in the Polcevera valley, reached by taking the “Casella light railway” as far as Sant’Olcese. The walk, a gentle downwards slope, ends at the abandoned village of Ciaè, where a refuge with overnight accommodation has recently been opened.

Water Stories

The upper Polcevera valley, behind Genoa, offers great possibilities of evading the



Spring is the ideal season for excursions and walks and Montoggio (large photo, top) is an excellent starting point. The Casella miniature railway is the best way to reach the Bisagno valley, the Upper Polcevera valley and the Scrivia valley.



greyness of the city. The Praglia plains are

wonderful for a classic country outing, perhaps

even with a picnic upon the grass, while a trip to the lakes of Gorzente demands a little more fatigue, rewarded with the great beauty of the place. Other water stories are told by the water mills in Ceranesi and Mignanego, and by the lock at Busalla, reachable with a short path from the town centre: a route of canals used in case of flooding and bridges that took water to the two mills at the end of the valley.

Living Nature

The itineraries along “the valleys of milk”, Stura and Orba, allow you to quickly reach pasture land. Elsewhere nature dominates all: in Sant’Apollinare, above Sori, and Fontanigorda, in



the splendid scenery of the “Wood of the Fairies”, an absolutely unique chesnut grove.

Trips to villas, gardens, vegetable gardens...



The large photo shows the evergreen appeal of the Park at Villa Serra in Còmago. The majority of end-of-the-century villas are to be found in the Scrivia valley: the buildings shown in the photos on these pages are situated near the Giovi pass.

The Liberty Style of the Scrivia valley

A holiday can also create cultural development. Evidence of this are the numerous villas, some built around the turn of the 19th century, scattered throughout the Genoese Apennine territory.

Constructions of floral charm, evidence of the well-being of many who could afford to spend a portion of their free time in “villeggiatura”. Particularly in the Scrivia valley, easily reached from Genoa, the villas are numerous, worthy of a visit or at least of a

quick glance, to learn about the tastes of the old-time bourgeoisie.

Fifty and one rooms

Do not be misled by the 17th century aspect of the Borzino villa in Busalla. It was finished in 1936 and the Borzino in question



was an insurance agent. There are over fifty rooms, with various architectural tricks (for example the slate fireplaces decorated with ceramics) to cause confusion



just a few examples. If you desire you can indulge yourself in a whole itinerary of villas in the upper Scrivia valley.

The park of Villa Serra

Decisively closer to Genoa, and recently enhanced in value by an attentive restoration process, is the Villa Serra of Còmago, in the Polcevera valley, close to the home-town of salami: Sant’Olcese. The 18th century construction was remodeled in the neo-Gothic style in the 19th century, with a Tudor-style villa and medieval tower. The whole complex is surrounded by a delightful English-style garden, with paths heading through majestic trees to the characteristic small lakes.



about the style and epoch: an example of postmodernity decisively ante-litteram. To see all the variety: again in Busalla, the Bruzzo villa has a sloping roof and wooden beams; the Gatto villa, in Savignone, is attributed to the architect Gino Coppedé and is distinguished for its chalet structure, with wooden balcony and beams and a sloping roof; in English style is the Davidson villa, also a work of Coppedé: it is to be found in Fornari and dates back to the first years of the 19th century. But we are not talking of



Watercourses

The landscape is certainly important, but that is not all. Following the water courses of the Genoese Apennines, with its streams, rivers, small artificial lakes or age-old ponds, can offer points of interest of every genre: botanical, geological, historical...

The fir trees of the lake

The Lame lake, in the upper Aveto valley. A very small lake, in which the greenery of the surrounding fir trees is reflected.



The lake was formed by a moraine and dates back as far as prehistorical times.



Further up, at 1300 metres above sea level, is the Agoraie reserve, open only to scholars and schoolchildren, with the Abeti lake (meaning fir tree lake). Splendid. It is so-called because tree trunks of white bark have been resting on its bed for over 2500 years. In contrast is the Nero lake (black lake), again in the Aveto valley, which takes its name from its pitch black reflections. Reflections which, however, are tinged white in winter after a copious snowfall.

Once upon a time there was the sea

Tied to prehistory there is also the Bargone lake, in the Petronio valley, a few kilometres from the sea and at a notable altitude of 850 metres. Man lived here as many as 100,000 years ago, as shown by stone chips found in the area. The lake, in reality, is a peat bog. But worthy of attention are the basalt "pillows",



cushioned blocks of lava stone in the form of compressed spheres: due to an underwater eruption of lava and therefore dating back to an age where the scenery here was somewhat different.

A "fresh water" aquarium

Four tanks, and as many fish habitats, make up the

river aquarium of Fontanigorda, with trout that splash around in the higher tank, where the water is wavy. Further on the water flow is less boisterous, here are the grayling, barbel and carp. The river aquarium is open till late, an evening visit, while less suitable for to schoolchildren, is of particular interest.

Lakes...to drink

Calm water, encircled by green scenery, gentle and undulating: the artificial lake of Brugnato, an eye-catching and agreeable site for walks and excursions. In the Scrivia valley, at the Creto

plains, is the Noci lake, of smaller size but again of great charm. On the western slopes of the Genoese Apennines are the Gorzente lakes, a succession of beautiful views and natural contexts of great interest.

The Abeti lake (left) preserves prehistoric trunks while the Noci valley lake (large photo) supplies the inhabitants of Genoa with their water. The reservoirs of the Genoa Apennine mountains are a real fisherman's paradise.

The discovery of hidden treasures



To the mine!

In the Genoese Apennines, you can end up at the mine, for fun or to deepen your cultural knowledge. In the Graveglia valley there is a museum of the manganese mines in Gambatesa. Here you take a small train with wagons similar to those used in the past by the workers. Not far from Gambatesa, in Reppia, a mining museum completes the set up. In Fontanabuona, the “road of slate” passes two formerly mined caves,

useful to understand how, in the past, they extracted the black stone from the subsoil. You can also go outside: the slate route travels over again the ancient beaten track once used by the carriers,



often wives of miners, who descended, slabs on shoulders, to the port of Lavagna. Along the way are some examples of rural architecture built in the black stone.

In the order given:

the rails for the mine wagons in the Graveglia valley.

Ancient stone and slate house in Fontanabuona. The forge, in the Iron Museum in Masone.

Interior view of the Paper Museum in Acquasanta.

A puppet from the museum in Campomorone.

Filigree & Co.

In Campo Ligure, valuable examples of golden and silver filigree are on show



in an elegant museum. Nearby, in Masone, there is the Museum of Iron, while in Rossiglione there are motorbikes, bicycles and other 1900's objects.

Chestnut civilization

Descending the Turchino route you arrive at Acquasanta, where the Paper Museum is evidence of the activity of the paper mills in the area.



While to fully understand countryside culture, head to Montebruno, a charming village in the Trebbia valley, with a rich and detailed museum on the topic. To further deepen your understanding

remain in the Trebbia valley, in Rondanina, where there is a museum of flora, fauna and local wisdom. To physically touch the rural reality of the territory there is nothing like the Ecomuseum of the Aveto valley, which stars the chestnut, the most vital raw material for this population until a few decades ago: in addition to the chestnut grove (in the hamlet of Luga) in Villa there is a chestnut drying facility, where the fruit was dried before being ground in nearby mills, such as the fully functioning example in the hamlet of Grammizza.

Again in the Aveto valley are the “Barchi”, traditional haylofts with mobile coverings, set down upon four poles.

Stories of war

Think of mountains and the conflicts of partisans will come to mind. In Propata, in the Trebbia valley, a museum remembers the time when this land was disputed over and ransomed at a high price. The museum of the Italian Alpine troops, in Savignone, a town in the Scrivia valley, has a similar role.

It also includes an interesting archaeological museum. Archaeology is also to be found in Cicagna, in Fontanabuona, where

there is the Slate museum, ideal to complete your knowledge of the culture of the black stone. Another worthy stop in Fontanabuona: in Favale di Malvaro there is a museum dedicated to emigrants. Many inhabitants of this area embarked upon a journey into the unknown towards America in the early 20th century.

Villages and playthings

The Toy Museum, in Gattorna somehow recalls the Puppet Museum in Campomorone, in the Polcevera valley. Again in Campomorone, worth a visit is the salt warehouse, a large building which is evidence of the ancient traffic along the salt road leading to the Lombardy plain.



Looking for castles

The “Castello della Pietra”

At times nature literally supports the work of man, and this is the case at Castello della Pietra (Castle of stone), close to Vobbia, in the Scrivia valley, fitted in between two rocky spikes which, in a certain way, form its side walls. A fascinating building, which in its time, the Medieval period, developed the function of “sentry” upon the road below, with its movement and traffic.

Today, the castle of stone holds historical and cultural interest. Arriving is easy, once you are below there is a quarter of an hour's walk. It was recently renovated in order to allow an easier, informative and interesting visit. Besides, the Scrivia valley is known as the valley of castles. The history of the Fieschi



family is reflected in the remains of their buildings in Savignone, Montoggio and Torriglia, while other castles are to be found in Senarega, Montessoro, Borgo Fornari and Casella.

What beautiful castles!

At Isola del Cantone there are the Spinola castles, but the greatest testimony to this noble Genoese family is the Campo Ligure castle, restored and wonderfully dominating the village and, to an extent, all the valley. It can



even be seen from the motorway with its flag fluttering upon the highest tower. A castle such as this cannot be left to waste, and it is therefore the host of events, exhibitions and, in summer, concerts. All this can be coupled with the pleasure of an interesting and informative visit. Of a completely

different character is the Geremia fort, in the municipality of Masone, that was constructed to survey the Turchino pass.

The Malaspina castle

Large and powerful, the Malaspina castle dominates the main scene of Santo Stefano d'Aveto, the most mountain-like town of the Genoese Apennines. The strong bastions give some idea of how this building could resist enemy assaults.

Four wonderful examples of castles in the Genoa area: the large photo shows the Castello della Pietra in Vobbia; on the left the castle in Campo Ligure; in the centre ruins of the castle in Savignone; on the right one of the turrets of Castello Malaspina in Santo Stefano d'Aveto.



Looking for churches and holy shrines



Churches and holy shrines. Buildings that are often out of the city walls, rich in art and architectural worth, frequently situated in panoramic positions. There are many good reasons, therefore, to embark upon an itinerary in the Genoese Apennines in search of sacred monuments.

Medieval art

If we are mainly interested in historic, artistic and architectural value, we must head for the Cistercian abbey in Tiglieto, the first erected in Italy by this order of monks, with its cloister and oratory in Romanesque style. In the not too distant Vezzula valley a worthy visit is to the church of Santa Maria in Vezzulla, better known

as the "Romitorio", or hermitage. It was also constructed by the Cistercians in the 12th century. Another historical-artistical example is the basilica complex of the Fieschi in San Salvatore di Cogorno. In a Gothic-Romanesque style rendered even more precious by a generous use of slate, the local black stone, alternated with white marble, and with a belltower, bold and stout, dominating the scene. Not too far from San Salvatore is Borzone, with its important Benedictine abbey of a sobre and fascinating Romanesque style and with greenery surrounding the complex. Too beautiful to be true. In the Aveto valley, in

Villacella, there is an interesting architectural complex with the remains of a 12th century



monastery and a watermill, unfortunately not functioning but well preserved.

Outskirts and holy shrines

Shrines are numerous. Let's begin with Guardia, overlooking the Polcevera



valley, with its gallery of ex-votos representing, in a mix of devotions and superstitions, a sort of

In the order given:
the Cistercian abbey in Tiglieto.
Procession to the Acquasanta Holy Shrine. The ancient monastery with mill in Villacella.
The Basilica dei Fieschi in San Salvatore di Cogorno.
The Santuario della Vittoria (Shrine to Victory).

album of daily life. Again in the Polcevera valley is the shrine of Vittoria (victory). The victory in



question is that of 10 May 1625 against the armies of the Duke of Savoy. The shrine of Aquasanta is found behind Voltri and is an oasis of peace that, particularly in summer, is pleasantly cool. There is more than the view here,

the environment is shaded by the characteristically large form of the building, and a visit to the local restaurants is also recommended. Again water is the star of the shrine of Tre Fontane in Montoggio, in the Scrivia valley. Situated along the course of the Creto stream, in the middle of a wood of age-old trees, this shrine hosts an interesting ex-voto collection. A very different scenery is offered by the sanctuary Nostra Signora di Montebruno, considered the most significant monument of all the Trebbia valley. Also the church of San Nicola, in Rondanina, re-made in the 13th century upon the remains of a Romanesque building, is worth a visit.

In search of traditional cuisine

Genoese cuisine, food of the land. This is why it is difficult to distinguish between the gastronomy of the Apennines and Ligurian cookery in general. Not that the palate takes offence, of course, because in typical inland *trattorias*, those with the checked tablecloths, you eat extremely well and pay very little, as it has always been.

Pesto & Pesto

The menu, often given spoken, jumps straight into the first courses. Pesto accompanies trenette pasta or, more often, trofie pasta or lasagna. There is pesto and there is pesto, and in the Genoese Apennines you can find many variations, all of them correct and



delicious: there are those who add nuts instead of pine nuts, those who prefer pecorino instead of parmesan, and those, especially in eastern Liguria, who dilute it with *prescinseua*, a fresh tasting and unmistakable curd. The *pansoti* pasta calls for nut sauce, the natural and authentic one, made

without sour cream. Not to mention the *ripieno* (stuffed vegetables), which number all the herbs of the typical Genoese *preboggion* in a symphony to taste with eyes closed, like good music. And the ravioli? With meat or mushroom sauce, not to be missed. In Genoese cuisine ravioli are filled with meat.



But there is also a healthier option filled with vegetables.

Fritto misto

The second course is the Genoese *fritto misto* (mixed fried food). Vegetables and meat, with some delicious specialty, from brains to curdled milk on a spit, not to be confused with the fried sweet milk that makes an excellent dessert. An alternative to the *fritto misto* is *cima*, stuffed meat

with eggs and vegetables. Exquisite.

Cuisine of the Apennines

There are some specialities truly connected to the cultivated strips of land. Mainly "peasant" dishes, a true means of support in the past which have today become, thanks to their richness of ingredients, a new delicacy. "Focaccia",



pine nuts) of the castagnaccio cake; *micotì* of the Graveglia valley is a focaccia made with corn flour accompanied by onions, lard, mortadella



In the order given:

delicious pansoti. Ingredients for pesto Genovese. "Country" cooking in the Montebruno museum. Ravioli. The original cima. Basil from Prà, indispensable when making pesto. Tasty focaccia. Mushrooms, the main ingredient for tagliatelle sauce.



in the Stura and Orba valleys, is called *revzora*, and is made with corn flour. *Panella*, typical of Fontanabuona, is a simple version (without raisins or

ham and various seasonings while *Baciocca* is a potato pie. A speciality of the Petronio valley is *testaieu*, pasta disks served with meat or pesto sauce.





Sport in the Genoese Apennines means above all contact with nature: the discovery of valleys and hidden treasures can also occur on horseback, or on a mountain bike. But it is not necessary to remain with your feet on the ground: the rivers and streams that outline the territory lend themselves to activity of every type. You can go by canoe, for example, taking part in canyoning along raging and demanding courses of water; or dedicate yourself, in a more serene and relaxed manner, to fishing, whether it be at a river or a lake. Skiing? It can be undertaken in the Aveto valley, where there are around 30 kilometres of routes for cross country skiing. There are also more

traditional activities, from tennis to swimming, from football to bowls, all played at specially equipped sites. And all with the advantage of fresh, clean air to breathe.



The trails of the Apennines

A network of trails closely interwoven like the intense greenery of the Apennine forests. It is not difficult to find the most interesting tracks, along paths often at

everybody's level. Lets begin with the trails inside the natural parks, all conveniently equipped and well sign-posted. For example in the park of Antola, some trails are in a ring form: the ring of Pentema includes a visit to the nativity-scene village and can be completed in around four hours without any particular steep climbs, the ring of Caprile includes, from Caprile itself, a climb up to Antola, crossing plains, pasture land and woods. Greatly scenic is the ring of Chiappa, which offers glimpses of the Brevenna valley and the Antola slopes. Enthusiasts and those well equipped could undertake, in a few days, the "Alta Via" trail of the Ligurian mountains, or the

brief but notably demanding route at Rocche del Reopasso.



The loop trail

The "alpine" Aveto valley also provides the chance for itineraries everyone is capable of: for example the ring of Groppo Rosso, intense but easy at the same time, with open views of the surrounding mountains and floral scenery of undoubtable



fascination. A beautiful excursion is to be found in the forest of the Penna mount; a harder climb leads to Maggiorasca, with its 1796 metres the tallest summit of all the Ligurian Apennines. Demanding, but not off-putting, is the ring of the Zetta mount, while a change of scenery and a landscape of great geological interest is to be found along the ring of Gargassa, in the Stura valley, where the dark rock background contrasts with the clear water running below. Again in the Beigua park, climbing Mount Rama from Sciarborrasca is rather demanding, but the view from the summit is unmissable.

Fieschi and Columbus

Some trails develop outside the protected area of the parks, but they are not any less fascinating. In Fontanabuona there is the path of the Fieschi, which follows a route passing the most significant sites of the ancient stronghold of this noble Genoese family. Also interesting

is the historical Columbus itinerary: starting at Terrarossa di Moconesi, place of origin of the Columbus family and ending at Quinto al mare, today part of Genoa: it is the trail of the "migration" made by the ancestors of the great navigator towards Genoa, where Christopher was born in 1451. Another interesting route is the



"Balcone sul Mare" or "Balcony over the sea", a 44-km route around the city of Genoa, and including parts of the "Alta Via" and the Columbus trail. Highlights of the route include the forts around Genoa and the passing of out-of-the-way villages.

The “High Trail” of the Ligurian Mountains

The view of the sea

From the Turchino to the Bocchetta passes, the “Alta Via” has one of its most significant and spectacular stretches, here it is at its

to the Giovi pass, historical and present passage between Genoa and the Lombardy plain. Then on to the Vittoria sanctuary and Crocetta d’Orero.



closest to the sea. The walk is gentle and the scenery is open with a 360° view difficult to find elsewhere.

Beyond the city

The “Alta Via” then encircles the Polcevera valley, lapping the higher reliefs, then moves towards the Scrivia valley, where the Genoese Apennines are more authentic and dense. It is the stage of the passes, from Bocchetta made famous by Coppi when the cycling champion dominated the Tour of the Apennines,

Fontanabuona and then...

Climb and descend, gently and docilely, until the Portello pass and arrive at Sella della Giassina, facing Fontanabuona, the homeland of slate. A stretch upon the ridge, smooth but complex, ends at Barbagelata, where you can observe the valley from up high in a succession of beautiful views and demanding tracks. From here the walk becomes serious, almost 35 kilometres of paths cross the most significant peaks of the Genoese Apennines. First of all is Ramaceto, still in Fontanabuona, at a height of 1300 metres: an unusual mountain, with the shape of an amphitheatre, a natural scenery of great interest. Then towards the Aveto valley, beyond the Bozale pass, in the area of Monte degli Abeti



Now we overlook one of the other great valleys of Genoa, that of Bisagno: as always from up high, at around 1000 mt, from the summit of Carossino to Alpesisa, up on Mount Spina and to the Scoffera pass.

and the Agoraie reserve; at a height of around 1700 metres are Mount Aiona and Mount Penna. Among the highest summits of the Genoese Apennines and worthy finishing line of the “Alta Via” of the Ligurian mountains.

The nature trail

The best way to understand and appreciate the Genoese Apennines is to walk there, along tracks which show the temperament, the colours and the frank nature of the place, alive and thriving.



The “Genoese” stretches of the “Alta Via” of the Ligurian mountains can also be carried out on horseback or mountain bike, but perhaps the greatest way to fully understand this territory, which offers such splendid emotions, is on foot.



Areas worthy of protection

A landscape to protect, a nature to understand. The four regional parks of the Genoese Apennines contain environmental treasures in a territory which, never before as now, needs to be preserved and protected like a defenceless being. It can be discovered of course, and visited, showing all the respect it deserves and with those special attentions that should always be given to a delicate and at times threatened universe. Precisely, a world worthy of protection.



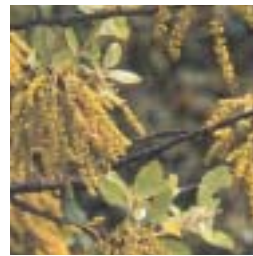
The Antola park

Embraced by the Trebbia and Scrivia valleys, this park includes one of the most delightful and rich environments of the Genoese Apennines. The panoramic peaks, starting at Mount Antola, are a favourite destination



for hikers. But the park also includes pasture land, age-old chestnut groves, splendid blossoming flowers, watercourses and lakes. Nature here is closely connected to culture: countryside culture, as shown by the ancient routes, the

traditional settlements of wooden and stone houses, chestnut dryers and mills. History and tradition are reflected in the richness of architectural works, from the castles that defended the territory to the sanctuaries, symbols of devotion. All is at hand



here, with excursion trails for walkers to understand the rich surrounding land, for example with a visit to a museum.

The Aveto park

The Aveto park is the most “alpine” of the Ligurian Apennines and contains the highest summits, between 1600 and 1800 metres, such as Maggiorasca, Penna, Zatta, Aiona and Groppo Rosso. The Aveto regional park also includes the Graveglia and Sturla valleys, and therefore offers a variety of environments and situations difficult to find

elsewhere. Set among the most elevated summits, some lakes of glacial origin



contain geological treasures of great interest and importance; some scenes recall the alpine areas

Natural Parks

of central Europe; lower down chestnut trees dominate. And again pasture land, extensive and green, a sign that the dairy production here is undoubtedly excellent. An environment that should be understood and appreciated without haste, preferably on foot, along a trail that rises upon a ridge in this unexpected and fascinating territory. Do not miss the cultural highlights, above



all the historic Borzone abbey and the entirely visitable Gambatesa mine.

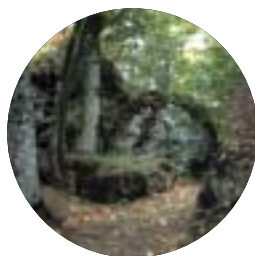
The Beigua park

The Beigua park is the largest of Liguria and includes parts of the provinces of Genoa and

Savona. Its fascination lies not only in its size, but in the great beauty of the mountains looking out over the sea. The Faiallo pass offers a wonderful view of the entire city of Genoa, with the horizon outlined by the Portofino



headlong to the east. From up here, on a clear day, it won't be difficult to sight the northern point of Corsica. The geological richness here is shown, for example, by the rocky formations of



the Gargassa valley, crossed by a ring trail which reveals it in all its beauty. While upon the opposite slope, the Pratorondanino botanical garden offers an opportunity to deepen your knowledge of the variety of flora found in this environment so close to the sea and so surprisingly different from other mediterranean areas. A significant artistic and architectural heritage is to be found at Badia di Tiglieto, an ancient Cistercian abbey situated in a tranquil green field.

The Portofino park

The most important Regional Nature Park of Liguria offers a double-faced reality, between the sea and the mountains. Behind a curve, along a ridge path, the mediterranean maquis gives way to an exquisite Apennine world: from pine trees and olive groves we pass to chestnut, maple, nut, ash and hornbeam trees. Not to mention the flowers, never so beautiful, never so varied as on this green strip of land stretched over the sea. To follow its

paths means to immerse yourself in a world of fascinating nature. And unexpectedly, from the greenery and the sea, an ancient treasure shows itself, the abbey of San Fruttuoso di Capodimonte, situated in an enchanting bay. Here the hand of man is discreet and respectful: for example in the cultivation of the terraces where the olive trees flourish. A land, as always, uncontaminated and protected, that needs to be preserved for future generations and to be enjoyed without haste.

Valley by valley

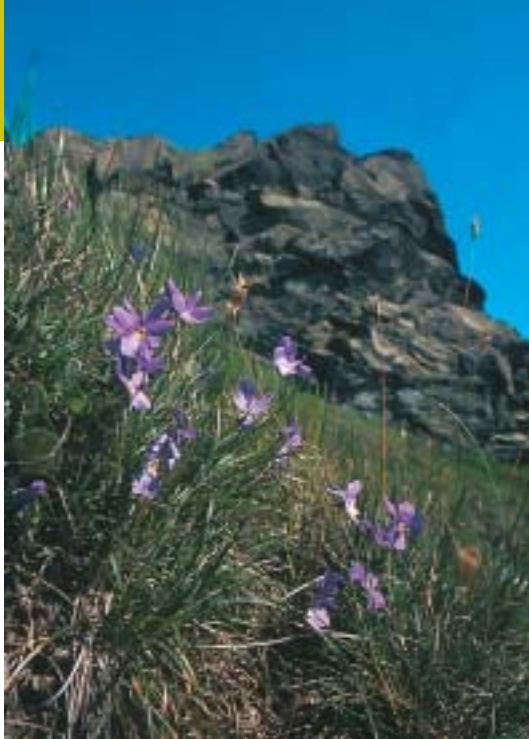
The Genoese Apennines: a rainbow that embraces all shades of green, nature in its proud reality. Unchanged, and always different, trails start at the sea and wind steeply up to high altitudes, routes created by the flow of water, decisive like the character of Liguria, areas populated by people who have layed down their character, culture and architecture throughout the centuries. A world that never ends, to be discovered valley by valley, path by path, town by town.

Arenzano, Cogoletto and the mountains of the sea

A territory overhanging the sea, with some wonderfully scenic summits making it a favourite for hikers: Argentea, Rama, Punta Martin, Pennello and Reixa are all so high and so close to the sea it seems you could touch it. At the shore the beautiful towns of Arenzano and Cogoletto; and between the coast and the mountains are Lerca and Sciarborasca, splendid balconies overlooking the sea. Higher up, the Faiallo pass offers an unforgettable view of the city of Genoa, and the Turchino pass is the gate towards the Riviera.

The valley of good things

Think of anything you want: in the Polcevera valley there is truly something for all tastes, or



if you prefer, here you can put together a complete lunch (and what a lunch!), perhaps starting with “Sant’Olcese” salami (also made in Orero). And then *corzetti* pasta, with a curious “number eight” shape, ideal for collecting all the taste of the classic meat or mushroom sauces. And the sweets are a delight.

The valleys of milk

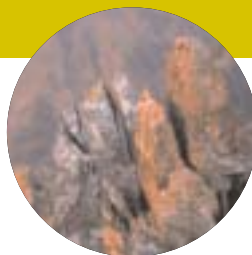
A land rich in pastures and watercourses, situated



behind the mountains that embrace the western Genoese riviera. The valleys of milk are situated here: a world to discover along an itinerary by car, which shows, stop by stop, where the milk comes from and where milk and cheese are processed. In the Stura and Orba valleys you can visit important artistic-architectural sites, learn about craftsman activities and follow paths of incomparable beauty.

The castles road

Mirror mirror on the wall, which is the most beautiful castle of them all? Beyond doubt, the Castello della Pietra in Vobbia, situated between two rocky spikes and overhanging the valley.



A wonderful record, it must be said, because the Scrivia valley teems with castles: interesting remains worthy of protection in order to save a historical and architectural heritage that is evidence of our past and our culture.

The water road

In Fontanigorda they have even created a river aquarium, but this does not at all surprise. The green Trebbia valley is rich in watercourses and lakes, not only the Brugnato lake (artificial but wonderfully picturesque) that represents the water reservoir of Genoa, but also the numerous streams, beautiful not only to look at.

The slate road

Slate of the highest quality is mined here, in the heart of Fontanabuona. To make roofs, shelves, walls, objects and billiard tables. Here slate can be bought directly from the producer. But above all, here you can learn about slate, along the various steps of a live museum, which leads visitors through the caves to demonstrate how the treasure of the mountains

was, and continues to be, extracted.

The valleys of the park

There is no rival, here nature wins, it offers many realities which not just any description can do justice to. From the greenery and hill areas of the Graveglia and Sturla valleys to the mountains of the Aveto valley the passage is not brief and needs to be taken with calm, to understand the territory moment by

the environment of the natural park deserves.

The valleys of olive trees

So close to the sea that the greenery here has the fragrance of the Mediterranean. The olive tree is more than a simple clue, it is culture, history and tradition. Reality. The civilization of the olive, the extra virgin olive oil that here, along the eastern Ligurian riviera at the foot



moment, grasping the gentle changes as you climb slowly, understanding its vegetation, and how the work of man has changed. Walk without haste, with the calm and respect that

of the Genoese Apennines, has an extremely delicate taste, so gentle that it is a pleasure to savour it with bread, so fine that even fried food retains its taste. Made this good only in the Petronio valley.



APPENNINO GENOVESE Provincia di Genova



Legenda

Key to the map of the Genoese Apennines

- Motorways
- Main roads
- Secondary roads
- Municipal roads
- Railways
- IAT - Tourist Information and Tourist Reception
- Tourist Information Points
- Regional Natural Parks and Protected Areas
- Holy Shrines and abbeys
- Castles, towers and forts
- Museums

USEFUL NUMBERS

Airport

Flight Information: 010 601 54 10

Motorway

Travel info: 89 25 25

Public transport

ALI Autolinee Liguri Bus Service: 010 54 67 42 10

Tigullio Transporti Bus Service: 0185 37 31

Genova-Casella railway: 010 83 73 21

Trenitalia train information: 892 02 10

NATURAL PARKS AND PROTECTED AREAS

Parco Naturale Regionale dell'Antola

Villa Borzino, Via XXV Aprile, 17 - 16012 Busalla (GE)

Tel. 010 976 10 14 - Fax 010 976 01 47

Parco Naturale Regionale dell'Aveto

Via Marré, 75/A - 16041 Borzonasca (GE)

Tel. 0185 34 33 70 - Fax 0185 34 06 29

Parco Naturale Regionale del Beigua

Corso Italia, 3 - 17100 Savona

Tel. 019 84 18 73 00 - Fax 019 84 18 73 05

Parco Naturale Regionale di Portofino

Viale Rainusso, 1 - 16038 Santa Margherita Ligure

Tel. 0185 28 94 79 - Fax 0185 28 57 06

"Alta Via dei Monti Liguri" Association

Tel. 010 24 85 21

GENOA APENNINE MUSEUMS

CAMPO LIGURE

Filigree Museum

Tel. 010 92 00 99 - 010 92 09 81

CAMPOMORONE

Italian Red Cross Museum

TEL. 010 78 36 94 - 010 78 22 92

Puppet Museum

Tel. 010 72 24 11 - 010 722 43 14

Paleontology and Mineralogy Museum

Tel. 010 722 43 14

CASARZA LIGURE

"Parma Gemma" Museum

Tel. 0185 462 29 - 0185 46 73 03

CICAGNA

Slate Museum

Tel. 0185 97 10 91

Eco-museum of slate

Loc. Chiapparino Tel. 010 97 10 91

COGOLETO

Loc. Sciarborasca

Country Folk Museum

Tel. 010 918 81 42

CROCEFIESCHI

Paleontology Museum

Tel. 010 93 12 15 - Mobile: 347 931 09 98

FAVALE DI MALVARO

"Casa Giannini" Emigrant Museum

Tel. 0185 97 50 67

LORSICA

Damask Museum

Tel. 0185 950 19

MASONE

"A. Tubino" Civic Museum

Tel. 010 92 62 10 - 010 92 60 03

MELE

Loc. Acquasanta

Paper Museum

Tel. 010 63 81 03 - 010 631 90 42

MOCONESI

Fraz. Gattorna

Moconesi Poli-museum

Tel. 0185 93 10 32

MONTEBRUNO

Alta Val Trebbia

Holy Museum

Tel. 010 950 29

Alta Val Trebbia

Country Culture Museum

Tel. 010 950 29

NE - Loc. Gambatesa

Mining Museum

Tel. 0185 33 88 76

PROPATA

Partisan Museum

Tel. 010 94 59 10

ROSSIGLIONE

20th Century Motorcycles and Bicycles Museum

Tel. 010 923 99 21

SAN COLOMBANO CERTENOLI

Loc. Calvari

"Tommasino-Andreatta" Marine Museum

Tel. 0185 31 44 03 - 0185 35 60 10

0185 35 61 02

SAVIGNONE

Alta Valle Scrivia Museum:

Archeology section

Tel. 010 936 01 03

Alpines Troops Museum

Tel. 010 936 01 03 - 010 93 69 30

USCIO

Bell and Clock Museum

Tel. 0185 91 94 10

VALBREVENNA Fraz. Senarega

Alta Valle Scrivia Museum:

Etnology section

Tel. 010 964 17 94 - 010 969 08 30

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