



Liguria, Piedmont & the Italian Riviera

Includes →

Genoa	166
Riviera di Levante.....	179
Cinque Terre	183
Riviera di Ponente	193
Turin.....	197
The Milky Way	212
Southern & Eastern Piedmont	214
Varallo & Valsesia	226
Aosta.....	227
Courmayeur	233
Gran Paradiso.....	235
Valtournenche.....	237

Best Places to Eat

- L'Acino (p208)
- Trattoria della Raibetta (p175)
- 4 Ciance (p215)
- Osteria dei Sognatori (p220)

Best Places to Stay

- Hotel Royal Superga (p214)
- Hotel Cairoli (p173)
- Hotel Langhe (p217)
- La Torretta Charme & Relax (p189)

Why Go?

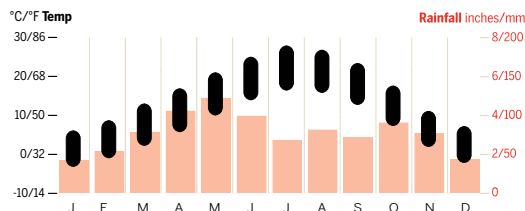
The beauty of northwestern Italy is its diversity. You only have to take a short train ride out of Turin and everything changes: food, culture, scenery – even the language.

The seduction starts in Liguria, a thin, precipitous coastal strip famous for its food (pesto and focaccia), swanky resorts and the once-powerful independent trading empire of Genoa. Piedmont is a flat, fertile medallion of land trapped between the Alps and the Mediterranean – an economic and political powerhouse that provided the nation with its first capital (Turin), a popular car (Fiat) and, more recently, Slow Food and fine wine. Mountainous Aosta, meanwhile, is a semi-autonomous Alpine region with a different history, its own language, and ample skiing and hiking terrain, all guarded by Europe's highest mountains.

If the three regions have anything in common it's their House of Savoy connections and proud sense of history. Italy, in the modern sense, was invented right here.

When to Go

Turin



Jan–Mar Most reliable snow cover for skiing in the Alps.

Apr Fewer crowds and better hiking on the Ligurian coast.

Sep & Oct Late-season hiking in the Alps and autumn food festivals in Turin and Alba.

Piedmont Discount Card

Serious sightseers will save a bundle with a **Torino + Piemonte Card** (www.turismotorino.org; 2/3/5 days €25/29/34). It covers admission to 190 of the region's monuments and museums, and offers reductions on various forms of public transport, including Turin's Sassi-Superga tram, GTT boats on the Po river and the Turismo Bus Torino. It also offers discounts on some guided tours and theatres. You can buy the card at Turin's tourist office.

TURIN'S CULINARY CREATIONS

Lavazza The family-run coffee company was founded in Via San Tommaso in 1895 and, along with Trieste-based Illy, dominates Italy's legendary coffee industry with an annual turnover of nearly €1 billion.

Chocolate Though no one city can claim to have invented chocolate, the Torinese have better claims than most: their genius was to blend cocoa with Piedmontese hazelnuts to form the epic *gianduja* (soft hazelnut chocolate), the precursor to Nutella and plenty of other chocolate goodies.

Grissini Breadsticks were allegedly invented by a Torinese baker in the 1670s to help the poor digestion of the future king Vittorio Amedeo II. The crunchy snacks caught on and are ubiquitous in most Italian restaurants and delis.

Cinque Terre – After the Floods

Freakishly wet weather along the Ligurian coast in October 2011 brought devastating flash floods to the two Cinque Terre towns of Vernazza and Monterosso, burying many of their historic streets and houses under several metres of mud. Tragically, half-a-dozen people were killed and Monterosso's mayor emotionally declared that his town no longer existed. However, employing a stoicism shaped by centuries of fighting off tiresome invaders, Cinque Terre has bounced back. As of 2013, most businesses are open again, although you may want to check ahead vis-à-vis the status of the iconic, but increasingly delicate Sentiero Azzurro (blue walking trail).

DON'T MISS

The region's newest sight is an extravagantly refurbished car museum in Turin's up-and-coming Lingotto district, known as the Museo Nazionale dell'Automobile.

Unesco World Heritage Sites

- ➔ **Cinque Terre** Medieval fishing villages and landscaped cliffsides on the Ligurian coast.
- ➔ **Residences of the Royal House of Turin** A collection of baroque pleasure palaces in and around Turin, including Palazzo Madama, Palazzo Reale and Venaria Reale.
- ➔ **Sacri Monti** Nine sacred mountains in Piedmont and Lombardy with chapels and pilgrims' paths dedicated to the Christian faith.
- ➔ **Palazzi dei Rolli** Forty-two Renaissance and baroque palaces in Genoa.

Resources

- ➔ **Liguria** www.turismoinliguria.it
- ➔ **Piedmont** www.piemonteitalia.eu
- ➔ **Valle d'Aosta** www.lovevda.it
- ➔ **Turin** www.turismotorino.org