

## Chapter 15

# Northern Tuscany and the Cinque Terre

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### *In This Chapter*

- ▶ Exploring city ramparts in Lucca
  - ▶ Checking out the Leaning Tower in Pisa
  - ▶ Discovering fishing villages in the Cinque Terre
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**N**orthern Tuscany is an area rich in history and natural beauty. In this book, we concentrate on its eastern part, near the beautiful Tyrrhenian Sea, where you'll find **Pisa**, with its justly famous Leaning Tower, and **Lucca**, one of Italy's most delightful medieval walled cities. However, no trip to the area could be complete without a glimpse of the Italian Riviera, especially as it is experienced in the national park of the **Cinque Terre**, a group of five picturesque villages clinging to abrupt cliffs and recently declared a World Heritage site by UNESCO.

Three days is the minimum you will need to visit these destinations, but of course, if you have the leisure and the disposition, this region could justify a longer stay. Pisa makes an excellent base for visiting any of the destinations in this chapter; it's not only central but it's also a pleasant city to visit, with a choice of moderately priced hotels. Alternatively, you can easily visit any of these destinations in this area as a day trip from Florence.

## *Lucca*

The great English poet Percy Bysshe Shelley passed by here and wrote "The Baths of Lucca," celebrating the unspoiled medieval town surrounded by powerful red ramparts. Lucca's architecture speaks of its past glory: an important city under the Romans, it later became a republic, fighting for its independence against Pisa (see Chapter 2). It was — and still is — famous for the works produced in its music school, founded in A.D. 787. A famous student of the school was Giacomo Puccini, who gave the world some of its greatest operas, such as *Madame Butterfly* and *Tosca*.

Lucca is an easy day trip from Florence or Pisa, but if you have time, it's also a wonderful place to spend a couple of days leisurely strolling the walls or enjoying an opera or a concert, especially during the September festival (see "More cool things to see and do," later in this section).

### Getting there

Lucca is about 64km (40 miles) west of Florence, and 22km (14 miles) north of Pisa, easily reached by train, bus, or car.

**Trains** for Lucca leave Florence every hour — and sometimes even more frequently. The trip takes about 1½ hours and costs about 4.55€ (\$5.20). Trains from Pisa to Lucca travel as frequently, but the trip is only 20 to 30 minutes and costs 2.05€ (\$2.40). **Lucca's rail station** (☎ **0583-467-013**) is just south of the walls, on Piazzale Ricasoli, off Porta San Pietro (St. Peter's Gate). You can easily walk to the center of town — if you don't have luggage or if you left it at the train station — or take a taxi or bus (see "Getting around," later in this section).

By **bus**, the company **Lazzi** (☎ **055-363-041**; for schedule information: 050-46-288 in Pisa, 055-215-155 in Florence, 0583-584-896 in Lucca; [www.lazzi.it](http://www.lazzi.it)) runs regular service to Lucca from both Pisa and Florence. The trip takes about an hour from Florence (for 4.70€//\$5.40), and about 30 minutes from Pisa (for 2.20€//\$2.50). Buses arrive at Piazzale Verdi, within Lucca's walls, on the west side.

If you have a **car**, from Florence take *autostrada* A11 toward Prato, Pistoia, and Lucca. From Pisa, you can take A12 north toward Viareggio and turn off toward Florence on A11; Lucca is the first exit after the junction with A11. You can also take the local road SS12 from Pisa to Lucca — it's narrower (two lanes) but shorter. You'll have to park your car outside the walls unless you are going to drop your luggage at your hotel — only locals are allowed to drive inside.



Parking lots are located near most of the six city gates; make a note of the city gate you parked near and of the bus route number that takes you there.

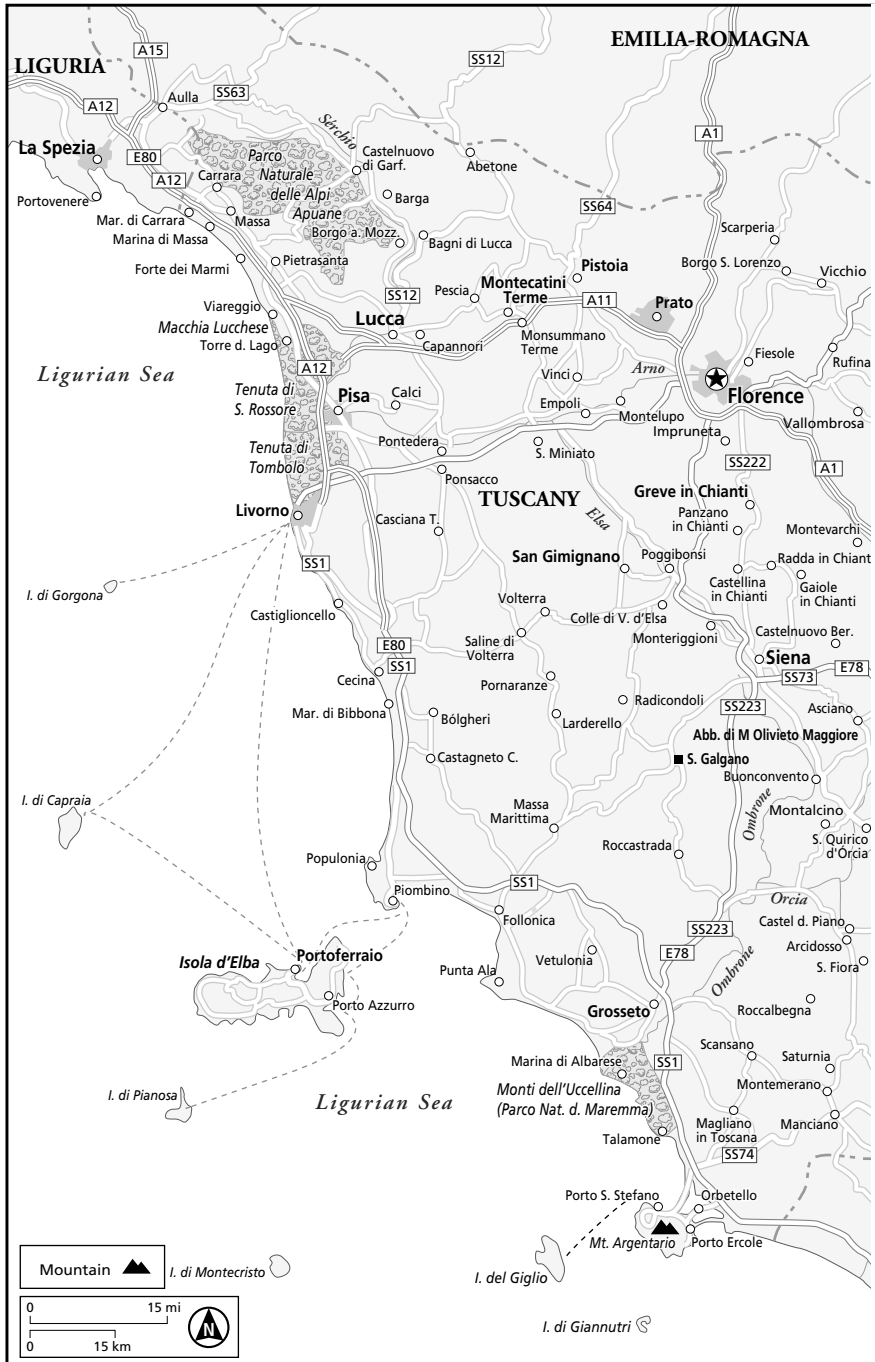
### Getting around

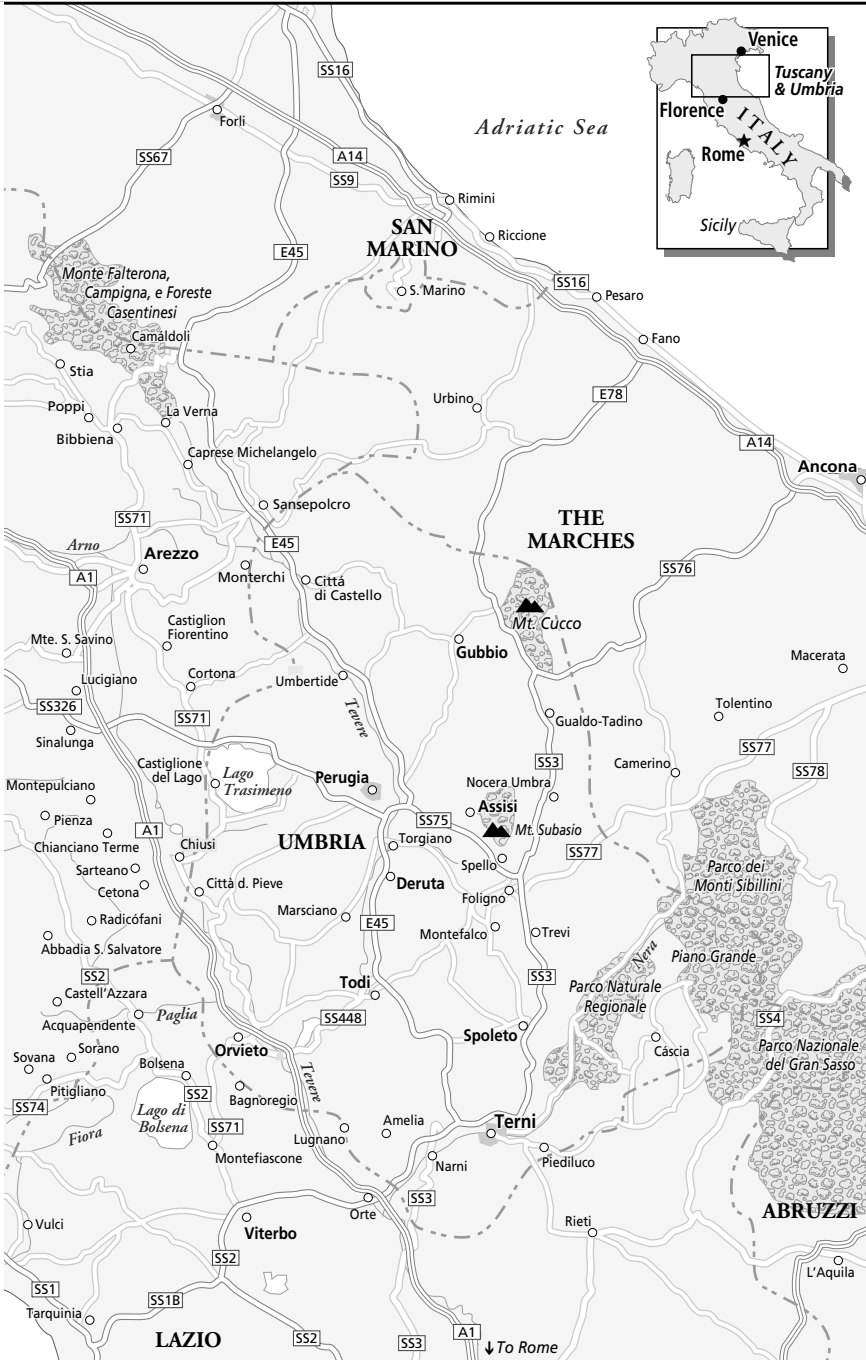
To fully enjoy the medieval flavor of the town, the best way to visit is on foot. However, Lucca is larger than one might think and, if you get tired, public transportation comes in handy: the electric *navette* (shuttle bus) system runs regularly with routes to and from most of the city gates and all parking lots, and through the center of town. You'll find a map at the city bus office (CLAP; Piazzale Verdi ☎ **800-602-525** toll-free in Italy or 058-35-411) and you can buy tickets (0.60€/70¢ for 1 ride and 6€//\$7 for 12) at any tobacconist, newsstand, or bar displaying the CLAP sign.



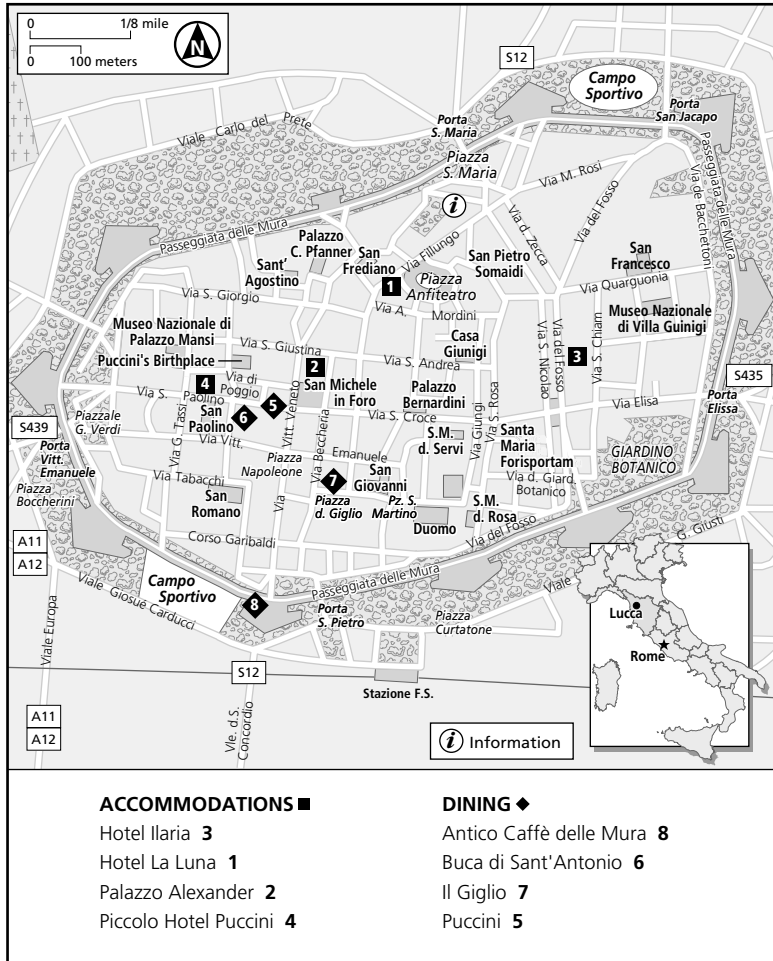
On Sundays the *navette* service is less frequent and most ticket vendors are closed.

Tuscany and Umbria





Lucca



**Taxis** are also a great way to get around — and they operate on a regular schedule on Sundays. There are stands at the railroad station on Piazzale Ricasoli (☎ 0583-494-989); Piazza Napoleone (☎ 0583-492-691); Piazza Santa Maria (☎ 0583-494-190); and Piazzale Verdi (☎ 0583-581-305).

Another possibility is to do like the Luccans do: Although residents' cars are allowed within the city walls, Luccans seem to prefer **biking** (see “More cool things to see and do,” later in this chapter.).

## Spending the night



### **Hotel Ilaria**

**\$\$ Via Santa Croce**

Tasteful guest rooms, breakfast on a quiet terrace overlooking a beautiful park, free use of bicycles, a parking garage on premise — all right in the center of Lucca. What else do you want? Discount prices at the best restaurants in town? You got it: The management of Hotel Ilaria has an agreement with three restaurants in town, including the well-recommended Giglio and Buca di Sant'Antonio (see “Dining locally,” later in this chapter). Beautifully renovated, this elegant hotel is housed in the former stables of the Villa Bottini and overlooks the villa's park — a quiet location near the canal that crosses the city toward the east. Guest rooms are spacious and pleasant, with modern dark wood furniture and good-sized bathrooms. Some rooms are accessible to people with disabilities.

See map p. 242. *Via del Fosso 26, off Via Santa Croce.* ☎ **0583-47-615.** Fax: 0583-991-961. [www.hotelilaria.com](http://www.hotelilaria.com). Free parking. Rack rates: 230€ (\$265) double. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V.

### **Hotel La Luna**

**\$ Anfiteatro**

This well-maintained hotel, renovated in 2003, offers a great value right in the historic center. It's divided between two buildings; some of the ceilings have 17th-century frescoes. All the guest rooms are spacious, decorated in warm tones, and furnished in classic style. Bathrooms are relatively small, but a few have Jacuzzi tubs. The hotel also has a number of suites — some quite grand, with large beds and high ceilings (for 175€/ \$201).

See map p. 242. *Corte Compagni 12, off Via Fillungo.* ☎ **0583-493-634.** Fax: 0583-490-021. [www.hotelalaluna.com](http://www.hotelalaluna.com). Free parking. Rack rates: 110€ (\$127) double. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V.

### **Palazzo Alexander**

**\$\$ Piazza San Michele**

This hotel, which opened in 2000, offers luxurious accommodations right in the center of town, with a staff committed to your service. The palace, originally from the 12th century, was restored according to the style of the original furnishings and decorations. Guest rooms are quite magnificent, in what the management defines as *stile nobile Lucchese* (Luccan aristocratic style), with much gilded furniture and stuccoes and damasqued fabrics; the bathrooms are decorated with marble and other local stones and some have Jacuzzis.

See map p. 242. *Via Santa Giustina 48, near Piazza San Michele.* ☎ **0583-583-571.** Fax: 0583-583-610. [www.palazzo-alexander.it](http://www.palazzo-alexander.it). Free valet parking. Rack rates: 170€ (\$196) double. AE, DC, MC, V.

**Piccolo Hotel Puccini****\$ Piazza San Michele**

In the heart of the historic center, this is a romantic hotel, offering moderate-sized rooms cozily furnished at low rates. Situated just across from the house where Puccini was born — hence its name — it is housed in a small 15th-century four-story *palazzo*. All the bathrooms were being completely renovated at press time and should be completed by the time you arrive. Note that there is no elevator or air conditioning. This popular hotel is always full, so book well in advance.

See map p. 242. Via di Poggio 9, off Piazza San Michele. ☎ 0583-55-421. Fax: 0583-53-487. www.hotelpuccini.com. Parking: 15€ (\$17) in nearby garage. Rack rates: 83€ (\$95) double. AE, DC, MC, V.

**Dining locally**

There are fewer good restaurants in Lucca than you would expect, but most provide a decent meal — you are in Tuscany after all — although sometimes it's overpriced. Those listed below are the best in town.

See Chapter 2 for more in-depth information about Tuscan and Luccan cuisine.

**Antico Caffè delle Mura****\$\$ City Ramparts LUCCAN/TUSCAN**

With its fantastic location atop the city walls, this elegant restaurant tries to revive 19th-century atmosphere. In the paneled formal dining rooms and, during the good weather season, in the gardens at the back, you will be able to choose from traditional Luccan dishes or other Tuscan favorites, such as the homemade fresh pasta and some of the delectable *secondi* (main courses), including such specialties as rabbit, duck, and lamb.

See map p. 242. Piazza Vittorio Emanuele, at Baluardo Santa Maria. ☎ 0583-47-962. Reservations necessary. *Secondi*: 14€–18€ (\$16–\$21). AE, DC, MC, V. Open: Lunch and dinner Wed–Mon; closed 3 weeks in Jan.

**Buca di Sant'Antonio****\$ Piazza San Michele LUCCAN**

Lucca's best restaurant, Buca di Sant'Antonio, boasts excellent food at very reasonable prices. The cuisine is strictly traditional, and you wouldn't expect anything else from a restaurant that's been around since 1782. The *capretto garfagnino allo spiedo* (spit-roasted baby goat from the Garfagnana area) is a classic well worth the trip, as are the *tortelli lucchesi al sugo* (special round ravioli with a meat sauce); the *petto di faraona all'uva moscato* (*faraona* hen breast with a *moscato* raisin sauce) gained our full approval as well. The remarkable atmosphere is characterized by a labyrinthine succession of small rooms decorated with musical instruments and copper pots. The service is professional and very kind.

See map p. 242. Via della Cervia 3, near Piazza San Michele. ☎ **0583-55-881**. Reservations necessary. *Secondi*: 12.50€–13.50€ (\$14–\$16). AE, DC, MC, V. Open: Lunch Tues–Sun; dinner Tues–Sat; closed 3 weeks in July.



### **Il Giglio**

**\$ Piazza Napoleone LUCCAN**

Less formal than Antica Caffè delle Mura (reviewed above), Il Giglio offers excellent traditional Luccan specialties and a friendly atmosphere. Dine indoors or, during pleasant weather, you can dine *al fresco* under an awning. Try the famed *zuppa di farro* (thick spelt soup) or the homemade *tortelli al ragù* (round ravioli in meat and tomato sauce). The *secondi* are also very tasty; you can never go wrong with the *coniglio alla cacciatora* (rabbit in a wine and herbs sauce) or the roasted lamb.

See map p. 242. Piazza del Giglio 3, near Piazza Napoleone. ☎ **0583-494-058**. Reservations recommended. *Secondi*: 14€–16€ (\$16–\$18). AE, DC, MC, V. Open: Lunch Thurs–Tues, dinner Thurs–Mon; closed 2 weeks in Feb.



### **Puccini**

**\$\$ Piazza San Michele FISH/LUCCAN**

Specializing in seafood, you'll always get a fine meal but you may not receive the service to match it. The cuisine mixes tradition with innovation, and the offerings vary with the season and the daily catches. More creative dishes such as *tortelloni neri di crostacei con asparagi e pomodorini* (black round seafood ravioli with asparagus and cherry tomatoes) and *salmone marinato al pepe rosa* (marinated salmon in a pink pepper sauce), are offered side by side with great classics, such as the excellent *frittura di paranza* (fried small fish) — one of our favorites. They also have a special children's menu offering simpler dishes, with fewer spices and special ingredients.

See map p. 242. Corte San Lorenzo 1/2, near Piazza San Michele. ☎ **0583-316-116**. Reservations necessary. *Secondi*: 16€–21€ (\$18–\$24). AE, DC, V. Open: Lunch Thurs–Mon; dinner Wed–Mon; closed Jan–Feb.

## **Exploring Lucca**

You might want to take advantage of the **Cityphone Guided Tour**, a recorded tour — available in Italian, English, French, Spanish, and German — that offers explanations and historic facts on all of Lucca's sights. Rent one Cityphone for 9€ (\$10), two for 14€ (\$16), and each additional one costs 7€ (\$8.05). Together with the **free city map**, it's all you need to explore the city in as much depth as you like. Both are available at the tourist office in Piazzale Verdi. (See "Fast Facts: Lucca," later in this chapter.)



You can buy a **cumulative ticket** that includes the Duomo and Sacristy, the museum of the Cathedral, and the church and baptistry of Santi Giovanni e Reparata for 5€ (\$5.75). Another cumulative ticket includes the Museo Nazionale Palazzo Mansi and the Villa Guinigi for 6.50€ (\$7.50).



*The top attractions***Chiesa e Battistero Santi Giovanni e Reparata****Piazza San Martino**

The 12th-century church of Santi Giovanni e Reparata was partly rebuilt in the 17th century. Together with the adjacent baptistry, adorned with a Gothic dome, they are a lovely sight. However, the real attraction here are the excavations under the church that take you back in time through layers of history. Beneath the later constructions, you can see the remains of a previous basilica, beneath which are the remains of a paleo-Christian church, itself built over a Roman temple, which was built atop a more ancient Roman house. The excavations are accessible to the public by guided tour, and it is best to make a reservation in advance. Expect to spend about an hour here.

*Piazza San Giovanni.* ☎ **0583-490-530** for reservations. Admission: 2.50€ (\$2.90). Open: Winter Sat–Sun 10 a.m.–5 p.m.; summer daily 10 a.m.–6 p.m.

**Duomo (Cattedrale di San Martino)****Piazza San Martino**

Sitting on a medieval square, this cathedral is a perfect example of Luccan-Pisan Romanesque architecture. Striped with green and white marble, the facade is decorated with three tiers of polychromed small columns. Take some time to walk behind the church and admire the imposing apse, surrounded by a small park. The interior is Gothic, divided into three naves, and contains several fine pieces, the most important in the **Sacristy**: Ghirlandaio's *Madonna with Saints* and **Ilaria del Carretto Guinigi's funeral monument**, a Jacopo della Quercia masterpiece that's one of the finest examples of 15th-century Italian sculpture. Ilaria was the first wife of Paolo Guinigi, ruler of Lucca, and he had the monument built to commemorate her death (she died at 26 after only 2 years of marriage) and beauty. Other interesting works are the *Last Supper (Tintoretto Ultima Cena)*, on the third altar of the right nave, and several sculptures by 15th-century Luccan artist Matteo Civitali (among which are the two angels in the Chapel of the Sacrament [Cappella del Sacramento] and the altar dedicated to San Regolo in the adjacent chapel). Also by Matteo Civitali is the marble housing for the Duomo's relic: the **Volto Santo**, a wooden crucifix showing the real face of Christ, said to have been miraculously carved. Adjacent to the cathedral is a museum containing artworks once housed in the cathedral. Count about 30 minutes for your visit to the Duomo and another 40 minutes for the museum.

*Piazza San Martino.* ☎ **0583-494-726**. Admission: Duomo free; Sacristy 2€ (\$2.30); Museum 3.50€ (\$4). Open: Duomo daily winter 7 a.m.–5 p.m., summer till 7 p.m.; Museum, Nov–Mar Mon–Fri 10 a.m.–3 p.m., Sat–Sun 10 a.m.–6 p.m.; Apr–Oct daily 10 a.m.–6 p.m.

***Museo Nazionale Palazzo Mansi and Pinacoteca Nazionale***  
**Porta San Donato**

This lavish 17th-century palace is still decorated with some of its original furnishings and frescoes. Of special note are the **Music Room (Salone della Musica)** and **Nuptial Room (Camera degli Sposi)**. The collection of paintings in the *pinacoteca* (picture gallery) includes Italian and foreign artists from the Renaissance to the 18th century; highlights are a portrait by Pontormo of a youth and works by a few big names, such as Andrea del Sarto, Veronese, and Domenichino. For a quick tour, allow about one hour.

See map p. 242. Via Galli Tassi 43. ☎ **0583-55-570**. Admission: 4€ (\$4.60). Open: Tues–Sun 9 a.m.–7 p.m.

***Museo Nazionale Villa Guinigi***  
**Porta Elisa**

Formerly the residence of the Guinigi family, this villa contains an interesting collection of Lucchese artworks, including paintings and sculptures from the 13th to the 18th century, and also a small collection of ancient Roman and Etruscan artifacts. The Guinigi ruled Lucca during the Renaissance, and some of the furnishings dating from that period remain. Allow one hour.

See map p. 242. Via del Quarquonia. ☎ **0583-496-003**. Admission: 4€ (\$4.60). Open: Tues–Sat 9 a.m.–7 p.m. and Sun 9 a.m.–2 p.m.

***San Frediano***  
**Piazza Anfiteatro**

Built in the early 12th century, this **church** has a simple facade decorated with a beautiful Byzantine-style mosaic depicting the ascension of Christ, as well as a soaring bell tower. Among the works inside the church are noteworthy Jacopo della Quercia **carvings** in the left nave's last chapel, the 12th- and 13th-century **mosaic floor** around the main altar, and the beautifully carved **Romanesque font** at the right nave's entrance. Allow about 20 minutes for your visit.

See map p. 242. Piazza San Frediano. ☎ **0583-493-627**. Admission: Free. Open: Mon–Sat 9 a.m.–noon and 3–6 p.m., Sun 9 a.m.–1 p.m. and 3–5 p.m.

***San Michele in Foro***  
**Piazza San Michele**

Probably one of the greatest examples of Luccan-Pisan Romanesque architecture, the church of San Michele was built between the 12th and 14th centuries. The church derives its name from the fact that it was built over the ancient Roman city's **Forum**. The facade is graced by four tiers of small columns and is luxuriously decorated with different colors of marble, while the apse powerfully illustrates the Pisan influence. Inside is a beautiful

**Filippino Lippi painting** on wood representing Saints Sebastian, Jerome, Helen, and Roch. Piazza San Michele, which surrounds this wonderful church, is itself lovely. Allow about 20 minutes for your visit.

See map p. 242. Piazza San Michele. ☎ 0583-48-459. Admission: Free. Open: Daily 7:40 a.m.–noon and 3–6 p.m.

### More cool things to see and do

Lucca is more than just churches and palaces. Herewith, more to explore:

- ✓ Lucca is a city of music, and you may enjoy catching an opera at the historic **Teatro del Giglio** (☎ 0583-46531 or 0583-467-521 for tickets; [www.teatrodelgiglio.it](http://www.teatrodelgiglio.it)), if you're there in season (Oct–Feb). The theater also organizes **Lucca in Musica**, a series of concerts in the Basilica di San Frediano and in the Auditorium di San Romano from April through December. A great time to visit Lucca is during the **Settembre Lucchese**, when a variety of events liven the city, including many concerts. Another great musical event is the **Sagra Musicale Lucchese** (organized by Cappella Musicale Santa Cecilia; ☎ 0583-48-421; Apr–June), when concerts of religious and classic music are performed in the city's churches. Contact the tourist office for a schedule of concerts during your stay (see “Fast Facts: Lucca,” later in this chapter).
- ✓ Overlooking the whole city, the **Passeggiata delle Mura** (promenade over the city walls) is one attraction enjoyed by visitors and Luccans alike. Erected between 1544 and 1650, this is the third and final set of city walls built by the independent Republic of Lucca (the first set was built in Roman times in the 2nd or 3rd c. A.D., the second between the 11th and 13th c.). In fact, they're Europe's only practically undamaged set of defense ramparts from the Renaissance — maybe thanks to their monumental scale measuring 35m (115-ft.) thick at the base and soaring 12m (40-ft.) high, and with *baluardi* (projecting defense works) at 11 different points. The tops of the walls were transformed into a tree-lined 4.2km (2½-mile) long public promenade in the early 19th century, with access ramps at 9 of the 11 *baluardi*. Today, after a short spell when cars were allowed on it, this scenic boulevard is restored to its peaceful beauty; do as the Luccans do and rent a bike at the **city-run stand** (Casermetta San Donato, near the city walls in Piazzale Verdi; ☎ 0583-583-150), or at one of these shops: Barbetti Cicli (Via Anfiteatro 23; ☎ 0583-954-444); Cicli Bizzarri (Piazza S.Maria 32; ☎ 0583-496-031) and Poli Antonio Biciclette (Piazza S.Maria 42; ☎ 0583-493-787). Prices range from about 6€ (\$6.90) per hour to about 20€ (\$23) per day.
- ✓ Lucca is dominated by two medieval towers, **Torre Guinigi** (Via Sant' Andrea, off Via Guinigi; ☎ 0583-316-846; open Nov–Feb 9 a.m.–5:30 p.m., Mar–Sept 9 a.m.–8 p.m., Oct 10 a.m.–6 p.m.) and **Torre delle Ore** (Via Fillungo, between Vicolo San Carlo and Via Sant' Andrea; ☎ 0583-316-846; open Oct–Feb 9 a.m.–5:30 p.m.,



Mar–Apr 10 a.m.–6 p.m., May–Sept 9 a.m.–8 p.m.). Torre Guinigi is topped by a garden with trees (entrance on Via Sant’Andrea), whereas the Torre delle Ore has marked the passing of time since the 14th century (the clocks have been replaced over the centuries and the current one dates from 1754). Recently restored, admission to the towers is 3.10€ (\$3.60) each, or 5€ (\$5.75) entrance to both.

- ✔ You can still visit the house (now museum) where the famous musician Giacomo Puccini was born: the **Casa Natale di Giacomo Puccini** (Corte San Lorenzo 9, off Via di Poggio; ☎ **0583-584-028**). The house is open October through December and March through May on Tuesday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 3 to 6 p.m. and June through September daily from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; admission is 3€ (\$3.45).

## Fast Facts: Lucca

### Area Code

The area code for Lucca is 0538; use this code when calling from anywhere outside or inside Italy and even within Lucca (including the 0, even when calling from abroad).

### ATMs

There are many banks in town, especially in Piazza San Michele, Piazza San Martino, and Via Vittorio Veneto, where you can find ATMs and change your money. There’s a *cambio* (exchange office) in the rail station and one near the tourist office on Piazzale Verdi, as well as others around town.

### Emergencies

Ambulance, ☎ **118**; fire, ☎ **115**; road assistance, ☎ **116**.

### Hospital

The Ospedale Generale Provinciale Campo di Marte is on Via dell’Ospedale (☎ 0583-9701 or toll-free 800-869-143).

### Information

The APT office is in Piazza Santa Maria 35 (☎ 0583-919-931; [www.luccaturismo.it](http://www.luccaturismo.it); open daily Apr–Oct 9 a.m.–8 p.m., Nov–Mar 9 a.m.–1 p.m. and 3–6 p.m.) and in Piazza Napoleone (open Apr–Oct Mon–Sat 10 a.m.–6 p.m., Nov–Mar 10 a.m.–1 p.m). Other tourist information offices are inside Porta Sant’Anna on Piazzale Verdi (☎ 0583-442-944; open daily from 9:30 a.m. –6:30 p.m. [to 3:30 p.m. in winter], and at Porta Elisa (☎ 0583-462-377), open daily from 9:30 a.m. –6:30 p.m. Apr–Oct.

### Police

There are two police forces in Italy; call either one. For the Polizia, call ☎ **113**; for the Carabinieri, call ☎ **112**.

### Post Office

The post office (ufficio postale) is at Via Vallisneri Antonio 2, behind Piazza San Martino and near Via Guinigi (☎ 0583-492-991).

### Pisa

Famous for its Leaning Tower, **Pisa's** medieval buildings overlooking the curving Arno offer some of Italy's nicest riverside views.

The origins of Pisa stretch back to Roman times, when the Italic settlement that had existed since 1000 B.C. was transformed into a commercial harbor (in the 2nd c. B.C.). The city's maritime power was realized in the 11th century, when Pisa was one of the four powerful Italian Maritime Republics, along with Venice, Amalfi, and Genoa. These rival ports developed far-flung mercantile empires (see Chapter 2 for a brief history of Italy). Pisa controlled Corsica, Sardinia, and the Balearic Islands, competing with Genoa for commerce with the Arabs. Centuries later, the city lost its water access (the river silted up) and its power: In 1284, Genoa finally won its struggle against Pisa, whose fleet was destroyed. Genoa became the dominant power in the Tyrrhenian Sea, while Pisa shrank to a possession of Florence. During the three centuries of its splendor, however, the wealth coming from far-flung commerce funded the construction of the monumental town that you can still admire today.



You can see Pisa's most famous attraction on a day trip from Florence. However, Pisa makes a perfect base for exploring most other destinations in northern Tuscany and, like Lucca, has a good selection of moderately priced hotels and restaurants.

### Getting there

Only 3km (2 miles) south of town, Pisa's **Aeroporto Galileo Galilei** (☎ **050-849-111**; [www.pisa-airport.com](http://www.pisa-airport.com)) is Tuscany's main airport, with daily flights from other major towns in Italy and Europe. From the airport, you can take a taxi to the center of town; it will cost you about 5€ to 7€ (\$5.75–\$8.05) and take about ten minutes. You can also take the **train to Pisa Centrale** (Pisa's rail station), a five-minute ride for 1€ (\$1.15); trains depart the airport about every hour. If you're driving, rental-car counters are at arrivals, inside the airport. Once you have your car, from the airport, just follow the signs for **Pisa Centro** (center of town).

From other point in Italy, the **train** is an excellent way to get into Pisa. The **Pisa Centrale** station (☎ **050-41-385**) is only about 3½ hours from Rome and a little over an hour from Florence. Trains run about every hour from Rome and every half-hour from Florence, and the trip costs about 4.95€ (\$5.70) from Florence and 23€ (\$26) from Rome. You can take the electric *navette* A across the Arno to the Duomo.

If you are arriving by **car**, you'll be able to drive the 96km (60 miles) from Florence in about an hour or less. From Florence, take *autostrada* (toll road) A11 to Lucca and follow the signs for A12 toward Livorno; watch for the exit for Pisa shortly after the junction with A12 South. From Florence, you can also follow the signs for Empoli-Livorno to reach Pisa by the more direct but slower *superstrada* (small highway). Three

large free parking lots are located near the center of Pisa, just north of the town's walls; each is linked to the center by bus service (electric or otherwise), which costs 80€ (90¢) per ticket. The lots are on **Via Pietrasantina**, only a few hundred yards from the Duomo (*navette* A); **Via di Pratatale**, a few hundred yards from the Via del Brennero (Bus 7); and **Via del Brennero**, near Via Paparelli and Porta Zeno, 1km (.6 miles) from the Duomo (*navette* E); this last lot is closed on Wednesday and Saturday from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. because of an open-air market. Paid parking can be found at Piazza dei Miracoli and in a lot at Via Cammeo for 1.50€ (\$1.70) per hour, the same rate as metered street parking.

### *Getting around*

Most of Pisa's attractions are clustered together, so that you can easily visit everything on foot. Walking will also allow you to discover Pisa's network of charming little streets and fully enjoy the beautiful views of the Arno River and its bridges.

**CPT**, the town's system of city buses (toll-free ☎ 800-012-773 or ☎ 050-884-111), connects all major points in town, and special *navettes* connect the main parking lots with the town's attractions. You can get tickets and a map at the train station or at the **CPT office** in Piazza San Antonio 1, by Piazza Vittorio Emanuele II. Chances are, though, that the only bus you may need is the A, which runs between the Pisa Centrale station and the Duomo. All bus rides cost .80€ (90¢).

Of course you can always take a taxi; there are taxi stands in Piazza della Stazione (call station for info: ☎ 050-41-252) and Piazza del Duomo (☎ 050-561-878); from anywhere in town you can call ☎ 050-541-600.

### *Spending the night*

#### **Grand Hotel Duomo** \$\$ Duomo

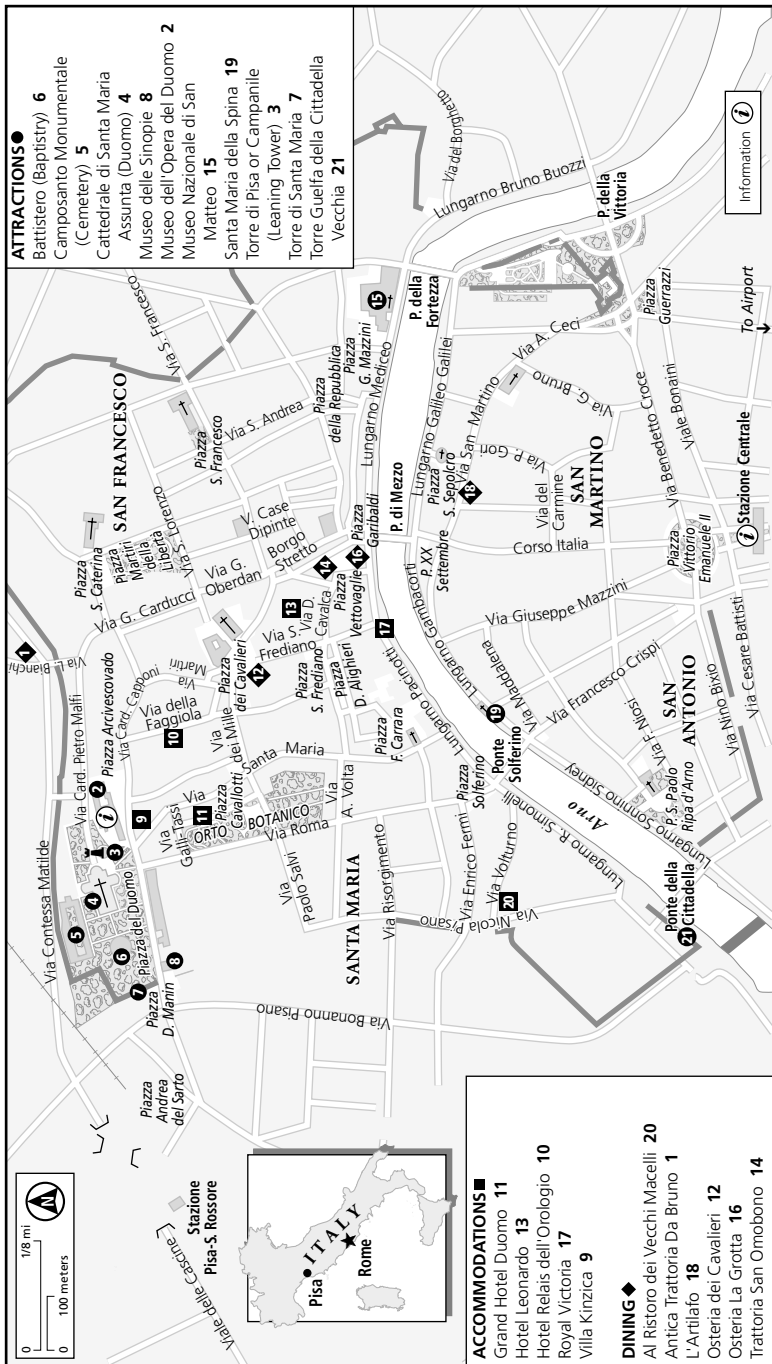
Right off Piazza del Duomo, this hotel offers comfortable guest rooms with high ceilings and parquet floors; front rooms offer views of the piazza. Guest rooms are spacious and furnished with modern elegance, and a few leftover 1970s details; bathrooms are good sized. The hotel has a covered roof garden with great views of the city, a restaurant, and full bar.

See map p. 252. Via Santa Maria 94. ☎ 050-561-894. Fax: 050-560-418. www.grandhotelduomo.it. Parking: 16€ (\$18). Rack rates: 180€ (\$207) double. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V.

#### **Hotel Leonardo** \$ Piazza dei Cavalieri

Walking distance from Campo dei Miracoli and the Arno River, this new hotel offers quiet accommodations at a moderate price. The hotel is housed in a building that used to be the study of Galileo Galilei; later, it

## Pisa



was the residence of a duc, Duca Salviati. Today, the building has been completely renovated and transformed into a hotel. Guest rooms are pleasant, with bright, whitewashed walls relieved by vibrant fabrics and simple but stylish modern furnishings. Some of the rooms afford a beautiful view over Pisa and the Leaning Tower.

See map p. 252. Via Tavoleria 17. ☎ **050-579-946**. Fax: 050-598-969. Free parking on street with hotel permit. Rack rates: 115€ (\$132) double. Rates include continental breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V.

### **Hotel Relais dell'Orologio**

**\$\$\$ Duomo**

Steps from Campo dei Miracoli, this historical palace was restored in 2004 and transformed into a hotel with stylish accommodations. Guest rooms are decorated with a subdued elegance that enhances the arched window frames and beamed ceilings typical of this style medieval building. The guest rooms and bathrooms alike are large and comfortable. The garden in back of the palace is the perfect place to have breakfast in the fair season. Ask about specials when you make your reservation (usually a discount and a free dinner on two-night stays).

See map p. 252. Via della Faggiola 12/14. ☎ **050-830-361**. Fax: 050-551-869. [www.hotelrelaisorologio.com](http://www.hotelrelaisorologio.com). Free parking. Rack rates: 326€ (\$375) double. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V.



### **Royal Victoria**

**\$ Lungarno-Ponte di Mezzo**

This hotel, located right on the Arno and walking distance of all major attractions, affords old-fashioned elegance, romantic views, moderate prices, and friendly service. Opened in 1839 as Pisa's first hotel, it is still run by the same family. The hotel occupies several medieval buildings, including the remains of a tenth-century tower; as a result, guest rooms differ greatly — some have frescoed ceilings and others are more simply decorated — but all are furnished with antiques and kept extremely clean. If you are planning to use the parking garage, you must reserve for that as well.

See map p. 252. Lungarno Pacinotti 12. ☎ **050-940-111**. Fax: 050-940-180. [www.royalvictoria.it](http://www.royalvictoria.it). Parking: 18€ (\$21). Rack rates: 125€ (\$144) double. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V.

### **Villa Kinzica**

**\$ Duomo**

Located just across from the Leaning Tower, the hotel is an excellent value, offering bright, clean rooms, most of which afford a glimpse of the famous monument. The hotel name comes from a Pisan heroine who saved the city from the Saracens. The guest rooms have whitewashed walls with simple yet tasteful furnishings and are extremely well kept. Bathrooms are small. A nice touch is the homemade rolls for breakfast.



See map p. 252. Piazza Arcivescovado 2. ☎ **050-560-419**. Fax: 050-551-204. [www.hotelvillakinzica.it](http://www.hotelvillakinzica.it). Parking: Free on street with hotel permit. Rack rates: 108€ (\$124) double. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V.

### ***Dining locally***

It is very difficult to have a bad meal in Pisa: restaurants and trattorie are plentiful and excellent. Feel free to try those that appeal to you — it was impossible to list all the restaurants that appealed to us! Food in Pisa includes typical Tuscan fare, such as *ribollita* (here called *zuppa pisana*, or Pisan soup — old rivalries die hard) and, because the sea is nearby, lots of seafood. See Chapter 2 for more in-depth information on Tuscan and Pisan cuisine.

#### ***Al Ristoro dei Vecchi Macelli***

**\$\$ Piazza Solferino PISAN/SEAFOOD**

A little outside the historic district, this is Pisa's best traditional restaurant and a local favorite. Housed in a 15th-century slaughterhouse (*macello*), it nonetheless offers a cozy atmosphere, with beamed ceilings and dark wood floors. This family-run restaurant offers traditional Pisan recipes that are reinterpreted with genius and elegance. The homemade ravioli are stuffed with fish and served with a shrimp sauce or stuffed with pork and served with broccoli sauce. Other inventions are gnocchi with pesto and shrimp, stuffed rabbit with creamy truffle sauce, and sea bass with onion sauce and oysters au gratin. If you're looking for a refined dining experience, this is the place to go.

See map p. 252. Via Volturmo 49, south of the Campo dei Miracoli. ☎ **050-20-424**. Reservations necessary. Secondi: 13€–18€ (\$15–\$21). AE, DC. Open: Lunch and dinner Thurs–Tues; closed 2 weeks in Aug.



#### ***Antica Trattoria Da Bruno***

**\$ Duomo PISAN**

Walking distance from the Duomo and just outside the city walls, this trattoria offers traditional homemade food in a warm atmosphere. You can dine in one of the various sized dining rooms, including a small “private” room which is the quietest; all of them have tables covered with pink tablecloths, beamed ceilings, and whitewashed walls decorated with photographs and copper utensils. The dishes are chosen from the traditional local cuisine and include homemade fresh pasta like the *pappardelle al sugo di lepre* (pappardelle pasta with hare sauce), *baccalà coi porri* (codfish with fresh tomatoes and leeks), *coniglio* (rabbit), and lamb.

See map p. 252. Via Luigi Bianchi 12, 3 block east of Piazza dei Miracoli. ☎ **050-560-818**. Reservations recommended. Secondi: 10€–15€ (\$12–\$17). AE, DC, MC, V. Open: Lunch Wed–Mon; dinner Wed–Sun.

**L'Artifafo****\$ Ponte di Mezzo/Piazza San Martino PISAN/TUSCAN**

The best restaurant in town according to the younger crowd, this is a place where you will enjoy masterly prepared Tuscan dishes with a twist. The menu changes according to market offerings and the restaurant is open only for dinner. Now in a new location, the restaurant is divided into several small, intimate dining rooms — each painted in a different pastel color. Among the *primi*, the *pasta con seppie e bietole* (pasta with squid and chard) is delicious, and so are the more unusual *cannoli con anatra in salsa d'arancia e porri* (tubes of savory pastry filled with orange-glazed duck and leeks). Among the *secondi*, the *faraona con farcia di fegato e con ciliegie marascate* (guinea hen with liver-pâté stuffing and maraschino cherries) was outstanding.

See map p. 252. Via San Martino 33. ☎ **050-27-010**. Reservations necessary. *Secondi*: 10€–16€ (\$12–\$18). AE, DC, MC, V. Open: Dinner Mon–Sat. Closed Aug.

**Osteria dei Cavalieri****\$ Piazza dei Cavalieri PISAN**

One of the most lively restaurants in Pisa, this osteria offers simple and tasty food at moderate prices. The two small and bright dining rooms are a perfect background for the food which delicately mixes tradition with innovation. We loved the *gnocchi ai fiori di zucca e pistacchi* (potato dumplings with zucchini flowers and pistachio nuts) and the *tagliata di manzo ai funghi pioppini con cannellini*, a perfect steak served with wild local mushrooms and white beans.

See map p. 252. Via San Frediano 16, off Piazza dei Cavalieri. ☎ **050-580-858**. Reservations recommended. *Secondi*: 8€–10€ (\$9.20–\$12). AE, DC, MC, V. Open: Lunch Mon–Fri; dinner Mon–Sat. Closed 4 weeks in Aug.

**Osteria La Grotta****\$ Ponte di Mezzo TUSCAN**

A favorite among locals and visitors alike, this friendly restaurant has an interesting decor — a papier-mâché grotto — and a lively atmosphere. The traditional food is nicely prepared and includes such specialties as *tortelli* (a special kind of stuffed pasta), *pappardelle alla lepre* (pappardelle pasta in hare sauce), *gnocchi di ricotta e spinaci* (gnocchi with ricotta cheese and spinach), and a variety of *secondi* such as stuffed rabbit and roasted meats.

See map p. 252. Via San Francesco 103. ☎ **050-578-105**. Reservations recommended. *Secondi*: 8€–14€ (\$9.20–\$16). AE, DC, MC, V. Open: Lunch and dinner Mon–Sat.

**Trattoria San Omobono****\$ Ponte di Mezzo PISAN**

Near the food market, this trattoria offers traditional Pisan fare at very moderate prices. Try the homemade pasta specialties, or such typical Tuscan fare as *ribollita* (thick bread, beans, and vegetable soup). Among

## Fixings for a Pisa picnic

An excellent place to eat around town is the **food market** on **Piazza delle Vettovaglie**, just north of Piazza Garibaldi and the Ponte di Mezzo, and off Via Domenico Cavalca on the west side of the market. Every day from 7:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., food producers from the countryside offer their specialties for sale. You can save a few bucks and have a great picnic, perhaps along the riverbanks, with fresh produce and Tuscan specialties. The food market can supply bread, salami, fruit, and everything else you'll need for a picnic.

the tasty *secondi*, we enjoyed the *baccalà alla livornese* (codfish with onion and fresh tomatoes) and *maiale arrosto* (savory roasted pork).

See map p. 252. Piazza San Omobono 6. ☎ 050-540-847. Reservations recommended. *Secondi*: 9€ (\$10). No credit cards. Open: Lunch and dinner Mon–Sat. Closed 2 weeks in Aug.

### Exploring Pisa

The monumental **Piazza del Duomo**, also known as the **Field of Miracles (Campo dei Miracoli)**, is where Pisa's top attractions are concentrated. The square was built in medieval times abutting the city walls — a quite unusual location for the city's cathedral, as far as cities in Italy go. Another unusual feature is that the piazza is covered with shining green grass — a perfect background for the carved marble masterpieces in the monumental compound.



If you're traveling between March and October and want to visit several or all of the sights of Pisa, you may want to buy the **biglietto unico**, which includes admission to the ten top attractions in Pisa, except the Leaning Tower, for 13€ (\$15). The pass is valid for eight days, and includes admission to the Duomo, Camposanto Monumentale, Battistero, Museo delle Sinopie, Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Museo Nazionale di San Matteo, Museo Nazionale di Palazzo Reale, Santa Maria della Spina, Torre di Santa Maria e camminamento sulle Mura Urbane, and Torre Guelfa della Cittadella Vecchia. It can be purchased only at the ticket booth of one of the four participating museums and at Santa Maria della Spina. Other passes, also available March through October, grant admission to your choice of two, four, or all five of the museums and monuments in Campo dei Miracoli, always excluding the Leaning Tower; they cost 6€ (\$6.90), 8.50€ (\$9.80), and 10.50€ (\$12), respectively.



If you prefer to see Pisa via a guided tour from Florence, contact **American Express** (☎ 055-50-981) or **SitaSightseeing** (☎ 055-214-721) in Florence. Both offer a tour of Pisa from Florence for about 26€ (\$30).

*The top attractions***Battistero (Baptistry)****Campo dei Miracoli**

Standing across from the Duomo, the Battistero was built between the 12th and 14th centuries, and its architecture reflects the passage from the Romanesque to the Gothic style during those years. It is the largest Baptistry in Italy and is actually taller — counting the statue on top — than the famous Leaning Tower. The exterior was once richly decorated with Giovanni Pisano statues, but many have been removed to the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo (see the listing, later in this chapter) for safekeeping, and only a few were replaced with plaster casts. Inside is a **hexagonal pulpit** carved by Nicola Pisano (father of Giovanni) between 1255 and 1260 and a **baptismal font** carved and inlaid by Guido Bigarelli da Como. Allow about 20 minutes for your visit.

See map p. 252. *Piazza del Duomo* ☎ **050-560-547**. [www.opapisa.it](http://www.opapisa.it). Admission: 5€ (\$5.75). Open: Daily Apr–Sept 8 a.m.–7:30 p.m.; Nov–Feb 9 a.m.–4:30 p.m.; Mar and Oct 9 a.m.–5:30 p.m.

**Camposanto Monumentale (Cemetery)****Campo dei Miracoli**

On the edge of Piazza del Duomo stands the beautiful wall of the cemetery (*camposanto*). Designed by Giovanni di Simone and built in 1278, this monumental cemetery has been the burial ground for Pisa's constables, and you can find sarcophagi, statues, and marble bas-reliefs here. The dirt used in the cemetery isn't common dirt but holy dirt from Golgotha in Palestine — where Christ was crucified — brought back by ship after a Crusade. During the 1944 U.S. bombing of Pisa to dislodge the Nazis, the cemetery's loggia roof caught fire, and most of the magnificent frescoes were destroyed. Parts of the frescoes that were salvaged — particularly interesting are the *Triumph of Death* and the *Last Judgment* — are exhibited inside, along with photographs showing the Camposanto before the destruction. Allow about 20 minutes for your visit.

See map p. 252. *Piazza del Duomo*. ☎ **050-560-547**. [www.opapisa.it](http://www.opapisa.it). Admission: 5€ (\$5.75). Open: Daily Apr–Sept 8 a.m.–7:30 p.m.; Nov–Feb 9 a.m.–4:30 p.m.; Mar and Oct 9 a.m.–5:30 p.m.

**Cattedrale di Santa Maria Assunta (Duomo)****Campo dei Miracoli**

The center of Campo dei Miracoli is occupied by the magnificent cathedral, Pisa's Duomo, built by Buschetto in the 11th century. However, its current facade, with four layers of open-air arches diminishing in size as they ascend, is from the 13th century. In 1595, the cathedral was heavily damaged by a fire that destroyed the three bronze exterior doors and

much of the art inside. The cathedral was restored during the 16th century, integrating some baroque elements. Still original is the **monumental bronze door** at the south entrance (the Porta San Ranieri) cast by Bonanno Pisano in 1180, the Andrea del Sarto painting of *San'Agnese* at the choir entrance, the 13th-century mosaic of *Christ Pantocrator*, and the Cimabue *San Giovanni Evangelista* in the apse. The **polygonal pulpit** carved by Giovanni Pisano was restored in 1926 when the original pieces were found; they had been put in storage after the fire in the 16th century. Plan to spend about 30 minutes here.

See map p. 252. Piazza del Duomo. ☎ 050-560-547. www.opapisa.it. Admission: Duomo 2€ (\$2.30). Open: Apr–Sept Mon–Sat 10 a.m.–7:30 p.m., Sun and holidays 1–7:30 p.m.; Nov–Feb Mon–Sat 10 a.m.–12:45 p.m. and 3–4:30 p.m., Sun and holidays 3–4:30 p.m.; Mar and Oct Mon–Sat 10 a.m.–5:30 p.m., Sun and holidays 1–5:30 p.m.

### **Museo delle Sinopie** **Campo dei Miracoli**

On the other side of Piazza del Duomo, across from the Camposanto, this museum houses the *sinopie* (preparatory sketches for frescoes) found under the charred remains of the frescoes in the Camposanto after the fire that destroyed most of them. Each *sinopia* faces an engraving that shows what the Camposanto frescoes looked like before their destruction. It is very well done and very expressive, allowing us to re-live what the magnificent camposanto must have looked like before 1944. Allow 30 minutes for your visit.

See map p. 252. Piazza del Duomo. ☎ 050-560-547. Admission: 5€ (\$5.75). Open: Daily Apr–Sept 8 a.m.–7:30 p.m.; Nov–Feb 9 a.m.–4:30 p.m.; Mar and Oct 9 a.m.–5:30 p.m.

### **Museo dell'Opera del Duomo** **Campo dei Miracoli**

On the south side of the Leaning Tower is the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, which houses plans for the Duomo, ancient artifacts found on the site at the time the Duomo was constructed, illuminated books and religious paraphernalia, and original artworks that were removed from the Duomo and other monuments for preservation. Particularly notable are the **griffin** that decorated the Duomo's cupola before being replaced by a copy (an 11th-century Islamic bronze, booty from a Crusade) and Giovanni Pisano's *Madonna col Bambino*, carved from an ivory tusk in 1299. Also interesting are the Carlo Lasinio **etchings**, which were prepared for the 19th-century restoration of the Camposanto's frescoes. Colored by Lasinio's son, they're the best record of the frescoes that were made before their destruction in World War II. Allow about one hour for your visit.

See map p. 252. Piazza del Duomo. ☎ 050-560-547. Admission: 5€ (\$5.75). Open: Daily Apr–Sept 8 a.m.–7:30 p.m.; Nov–Feb 9 a.m.–4:30 p.m.; Mar and Oct 9 a.m.–5:30 p.m.

***Museo Nazionale di San Matteo (National Museum of S. Matteo)***  
**Piazza Mazzini**

The monuments on Campo dei Miracoli steal the show in Pisa, but this very important museum should not be overlooked if you are interested in Italian Renaissance art. Its collection of paintings from the 12th to the 15th centuries is one of the best in the world, and its sculpture gallery — including works from the Middle Ages to the 16th century — is very rich. Some of the works come from nearby churches, particularly from Santa Maria della Spina (see below), others from ecclesiastical buildings farther away in the town's territory. Important masterpieces include the 1426 painting *San Paolo* by Masaccio, two paintings of the *Madonna con i Santi* by Ghirlandaio, the sculpture of the *Madonna del Latte* by Andrea and Nino Pisano, and sculptures by Donatello. Depending on your level of endurance, it could take you one to several hours to visit this museum.

See map p. 252. Lungarno Mediceo-Piazza San Matteo, near Piazza Mazzini. ☎ 050-541-865. Admission: 4€ (\$4.60). Open: Tues–Sat 9 a.m.–7 p.m., Sun 9 a.m.–2 p.m.

***Santa Maria della Spina***  
**Ponte Solferino**

This small church, which has survived in spite of its dangerous location above unstable ground near the river bed, is a trove of marble carvings. Built on the river shore in 1230 as an oratory near a bridge that was destroyed in the 15th century, the church was enlarged during the 14th century and decorated by some of the town's best artists of the time. Its foundations were strengthened several times during the centuries, and in 1871, as a final drastic effort to consolidate the ground on which the church was built, the entire structure was taken apart and re-built on a 1.2m (4-ft.) high base. During this process, many of the original sculptures were moved to the Museo Nazionale di San Matteo and replaced with copies, and the entire sacristy was destroyed. Although this loss somewhat ruined the proportions of the building, it remains one of the most delightful examples of Tuscan Gothic architecture. The many delicate carvings on the external walls as well as the elegant arches and windows and the simple interior in contrasting stripes of marble make a wonderful encasing for the sculptural masterpiece by Andrea and Nino Pisano, the *Madonna della rosa* (1345-1348). Plan to spend about a half-hour here.

See map p. 252. Lungarno Gambacorti, near Ponte Solferino. ☎ 055-321-5446. Admission: 1.50€ (\$1.70). Open: Nov–Feb Tues–Sun 10 a.m.–2 p.m., second Sun of the month 10 a.m.–1 p.m. and 2:30–5 p.m.; Mar–Oct Tues–Fri 10 a.m.–1:30 p.m. and 2:30–5 p.m., Sat–Sun 10 a.m.–7 p.m.

***Torre di Pisa or Campanile (Leaning Tower)***  
**Campo dei Miracoli**

Behind the Duomo is the famous Leaning Tower, the Duomo's Campanile (bell tower). Started in 1173 by the architect Bonnano, this beautiful eight-story carved masterpiece, with open-air arches matching those on the

Duomo, was finally finished in 1360. It took so long to build because it started leaning almost from the beginning, so the Pisans stopped construction in 1185. In 1275, they started again and built up to the belfry, cleverly curving the structure as they went to compensate for the lean. The construction stopped again, until 1360, when the belfry was added. Later architects and engineers studied the problem — the shifting alluvial subsoil, saturated with water — but couldn't devise a solution (one attempt to fix it made it lean more). In 1990, the lean became so bad — 4.5m (15 ft.) out of plumb — that the tower was closed to the public. Two years later, a belt of steel cables was placed around the base, and in 1993, it was decided to stop ringing the bells to prevent vibrations from shaking the tower, and visits to the tower had to be stopped. But after a \$24-million restoration, engineers succeeded in reducing the tower's lean by 15 inches. It reopened in December 2001.

The visit is guided and tours start every 30 minutes; your ticket is valid only for the time stamped on it. You can now make advance reservations online at [www.opapisa.it](http://www.opapisa.it) for an additional cost of 2€ (\$2.30) per ticket; you must pick up your printed voucher from the ticket office at least one hour before your reserved slot. Tickets can be purchased up to 15 days in advance.



There are no elevators in the tower, and access is through the original — and very narrow — staircase. It's 300 steep steps to the top and it is impossible to stop or turn around, making the climb physically and psychologically taxing. Anybody suffering from vertigo or claustrophobia should not attempt it. Children under 8 are not allowed in the tower.

See map p. 252. Piazza del Duomo. ☎ 050-560-547. [www.opapisa.it](http://www.opapisa.it). Admission: 15€ (\$17). Open: Daily 8:30 a.m.–8:30 p.m.

### More cool things to see and do



- ✓ Some of the town celebrations are great fun: a traditional event is the **Gioco del Ponte**, held on the last Sunday in June, when teams from the north and south sides of the Arno fight each other. Wearing Renaissance costumes, the teams use a decorated 6300kg (7-ton) cart to push each other off the Ponte di Mezzo, the Roman bridge at the center of town. Another town celebration is the **Festa di San Ranieri**, on June 16 and 17, held in honor of Pisa's patron saint. The Arno is lit with torches all along its length, which makes quite a beautiful sight. Contact the tourist office for more information (see "Fast Facts: Pisa," later in this chapter).
- ✓ To get a different perspective on the town, you can visit one, or both, of Pisa's **medieval towers**. The **Torre di Santa Maria** (Piazza del Duomo; ☎ 050-560-547; admission: 2€/2.30, free for children under 10; open: daily Mar–Oct 11 a.m.–2 p.m. and 3–6 p.m.) overlooks the Campo dei Miracoli while the **Torre Guelfa della Cittadella Vecchia** (Piazza Tersanaia; ☎ 055-321-5446; admission 2€/2.30, free for children under 10; open: Mar–Oct Fri–Sun 3–7 p.m., Nov–Feb Sat–Sun 2–5 p.m.; second Sun of month 10 a.m.–1 p.m. and 3–5 p.m.), affords great views over the Arno River and the surrounding countryside.

✓ **The Cooperativa il Navicello** (Lungarno Galilei 7; ☎ 050-540-162 or 338-980-8867) operates several **cruises**, including the “Tour Lungarno,” a cruise along the urban portion of the river Arno (by reservation only; Apr–Oct weekends and holidays). This is the best way to fully savor the medieval flavor of Pisa. Boats leave from San Paolo a Ripa d’Arno on the hour from 10 a.m. to noon and from 3 to 6 p.m.; from May through September there is an additional cruise at 7 p.m. The trip lasts about an hour and tickets are 5€ (\$5.75) per person.

## Fast Facts: Pisa

### Area Code

The area code for Pisa is 050; use this code when calling from anywhere outside or inside Italy, even within Pisa (include the 0 every time, even when calling from abroad).

### ATMs

There are many banks in town with ATMs, especially on Corso Italia and Via G. Mazzini. There’s a *cambio* (exchange office) at the airport and several in town, including one on Piazza del Duomo.

### Emergencies

Ambulance, ☎ 118; fire, ☎ 115; road assistance, ☎ 116.

### Hospital

The Ospedale Santa Chiara is at Via Roma 67, nearby the Duomo (☎ 050-554-433).

### Information

The tourist office (☎ 050-929-777; Fax: 050-929-764) maintains three information

booths, one outside Pisa Centrale, just to the left when you exit (☎ 050-42-291; open Mon–Sat 9 a.m.–7 p.m. and Sun 9:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m.); one near the Duomo at Via Cammeo 2 (☎ 050-560-464; open Mon–Sat 9 a.m.–6 p.m. and Sun 10:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.); and at the airport (☎ 050-503-700; open daily 10:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m. and 6–10 p.m.).

### Internet Access

Internet Surf is at Via Carducci 5, west of the Duomo, by Piazza Martiri della Libertà (☎ 050-830-800; [www.internetsurf.it](http://www.internetsurf.it); open Mon–Fri 10 a.m.–11 p.m., Sat 10:30 a.m.–11 p.m., Sun 3–11 p.m.).

### Police

There are two police forces in Italy; call either one. For the Polizia, call ☎ 113; for the Carabinieri, call ☎ 112.

### Post Office

The Central Post Office is in Piazza Vittorio Emanuele II 7/8 (☎ 050-519-41), near the railroad station of Pisa Centrale.

## The Cinque Terre

If you push on a bit farther along the coast, into neighboring Liguria and the Riviera di Levante (part of the Italian Riviera), you discover the **Cinque Terre**, a fishing and agricultural area of great natural beauty. Nested here at the water’s edge and insulated from the inland by towering promontories are its five small towns: **Monterosso al Mare**, **Vernazza**, **Corniglia**, **Manarola**, and **Riomaggiore**.



The **Cinque Terre**, together with the sea surrounding them, were declared a national park a few years back — the first example of a national park created to protect a man-made environment, such as the almost vertical terraces where the locals have nurtured their vineyards and lemon orchards for centuries.



The Cinque Terre region is a great place to spend some time with your kids. The breathtaking views, the sea, the swimming, and the hiking provide a great respite from the usual cultural attractions.

While it is possible to “do” the Cinque Terre in a day, the area is definitely worth more than one day if you can spare the time — especially if you are into hiking and swimming.

### Getting there

The best way to reach the Cinque Terre is by train or boat. You can catch a direct **train** from Pisa, but from most other places you’ll need to change in La Spezia — the largish town at the southeastern end of the Gulf of the Poets and the gateway to the natural park of the Cinque Terre — to the local train line for Levanto, Riomaggiore, and Monterosso are the two village stations where the most trains stop, but trains run frequently to each of the five villages; and the entire ride from La Spezia to Levanto costs only about 2.60€ (\$3). Note that you can purchase a special pass including admission to and transportation within the park; see “Getting around,” later in this chapter.

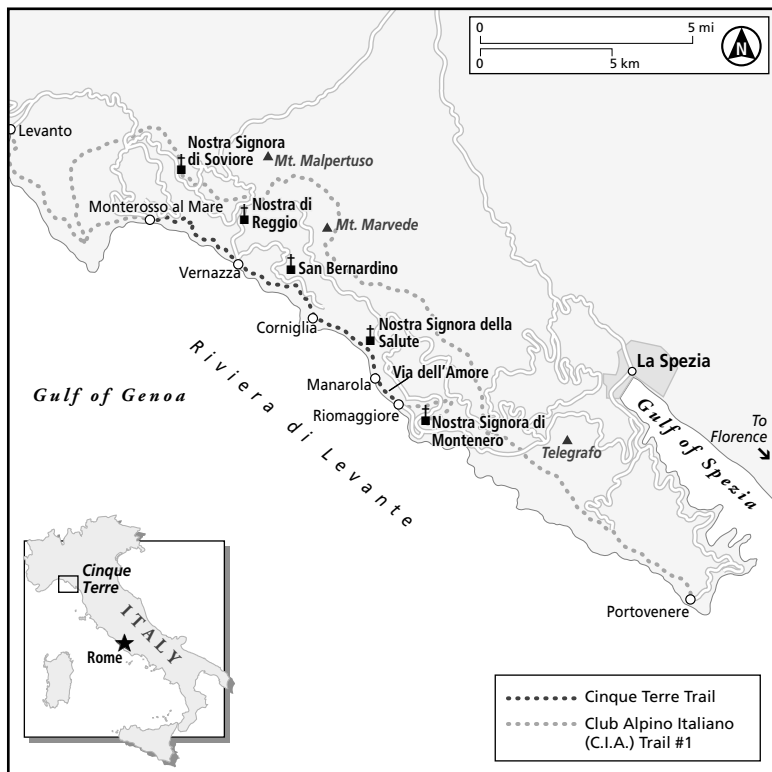


The railroad tracks that run through the Cinque Terre are literally carved into the mountain, and in some stations, part of the platform is in the tunnel, making it difficult to know where you are. Pay attention and, if in doubt, ask the conductor or another passenger to alert you to your stop — just pronounce the name of the village with an interrogative inflection, they’ll understand you.

In this magnificent land sloping steeply to the sea, boats are often better friends than cars. Even if you intend to use the train, consider taking a **boat** at least for one leg of your trip: viewing the Cinque Terre from the sea is a part of the magic that shouldn’t be missed. The **Consorzio Marittimo Turistico 5 Terre Golfo dei Poeti** (☎ 0187-732-987; [www.navigazionegolfodeipoeti.it](http://www.navigazionegolfodeipoeti.it)) runs half- and full-day cruises during the season (Mar 27–Nov 1), leaving from Molo Italia (dock Italia) in the harbor of the town of La Spezia at 9:15 a.m. and 10 a.m. (for the full-day excursion) or at 2:15 p.m. (for the afternoon trip) and returning by 6:30 p.m. The cost is 20€ (\$23) for the whole day and 15€ (\$17) for the afternoon only; children aged four to ten pay 11€ (\$13) for either cruise; children under 4 travel free. The ticket also includes unlimited rides on the boat service between the villages (see “Getting around,” later in this chapter) and you can hop on and off between the villages as you please.

We do not recommend visiting the Cinque Terre by **car**, especially during the summer months, when cars are completely off limits in the villages — even for unloading luggage at your hotel. If you are traveling by car you

## The Cinque Terre



can leave it at the ACIPARK lot in La Spezia (Via Crispi 73; ☎ **0187-510-545**) for 4€ (\$4.30) and proceed by train or boat. If you insist on driving the whole way, the easiest route is to take the *autostrada* A12 toward Genova and take the exit for Carradano-Levanto; follow signs for the Cinque Terre towards Monterosso al Mare. In Monterosso, you can stow your car in the **large parking lot** (☎ **0187-802-050**) provided for visitors (about 8.25€/9.50 per day). From there you can get a taxi to town for about 7€ (\$8.05) or take the shuttle bus (price included in the Cinque Terre Pass; see “Getting around,” later in this section). Beware, though, this lot does get full in the height of the summer season.

### Getting around

Trains and boats are the best way to move from one village to another, although the walking trails offer a unique experience. All of the five villages are connected by frequent **train service**, and a service of electric **navettes** (minibuses) connects each train station with the village harbors, trail heads, and other destinations in the park.



Be aware that most of the train run is through tunnels — the line was excavated along the cliff, after all. So don't expect scenic train rides — you'll see mostly solid rock!



The **Cinque Terre Card**, available at any rail station, is the best way to get around: the pass gives you unlimited rides on trains between Levanto, each of the Cinque Terre, and La Spezia, on the *navettes*, as well as free access to the trails within the park. For a small additional fee, you can also get unlimited rides by boat with the regular boat service. The daily card costs 5.40€ (\$6.20) for adults and 2.70€ (\$3.10) for children aged 4 to 12; the 3-day card costs 13€ (\$15) for adults and 6.50€ (\$7.50) for children aged 4 to 12. The daily card with boat service costs 13.60€ (\$15.60) for adults and 6.80€ (\$7.80) for children aged 4 to 12 (the 3-day card with boat service is not available).

Regular **boat service** runs between Monterosso and Riomaggiore, with stops in Vernazza and, every other trip, also in Manarola. Service starts at 9.20 a.m. in Riomaggiore and 10 a.m. in Monterosso and boats run about every hour; the last boat leaves Riomaggiore at 5:25 p.m. and Monterosso at 6 p.m. A day pass costs 11.50€ (\$13) for adults and 6.50€ (\$7.50) for children between four and ten years of age. It is provided by the Consorzio Marittimo Turistico 5 Terre *Golfo dei Poeti* (see “Getting to the Cinque Terre,” earlier in this section).

If you are fit, **walking** is the only way to fully discover the beauty of the villages and the surrounding cliffs, with their paths carved into the earth. There are trails between each of the villages and to the *Santuari* (churches) up the hills. There is a fee to access each section of the main trail connecting the villages, unless you purchase the Cinque Terre Card.



If you intend to walk, you'll need to schedule enough time and, if you're traveling in the hot season, you'll need to hit the trails early, when the air is still cool and the sea breeze is with you, or you'll be broiling-hot. Plan to arrive at the head of the trail you have chosen early enough so that you can be done with your walk by around 10 o'clock (see our estimated walking times in “More cool things to see and do,” later in this chapter). This will give you some leeway in case you decide to linger, and still keep you from the hottest hours of the day.



Although it is permissible to **drive** between the five villages, we don't recommend it; the local road SS370, is a twisty and narrow mountain road, and parking facilities — small and expensive — exist only in Riomaggiore, Corniglia, and Manarola.

## Spending the night



### Bed and Breakfast *Il Vigneto* \$ Manarola/Riomaggiore

The friendly atmosphere, the location up high in the promontory overlooking the sea, and the lush gardens, all contribute to make this one of

our favorite places to stay in the area. The whitewashed walls with dark wood or iron-work furniture give the guest rooms a faint Mission feeling; the rooms are spacious and so are the bathrooms. The terrace, where breakfast is served in the good season, offers a breathtaking view sweeping over the sea and the dry wall terraces. There is no air-conditioning, but the mountain air will keep you cool. A *navette* service takes you to the center of town and to the railroad station.

*Via Pasubio 64 in Volastra, a small village above Riomaggiore and Manarola. ☎ 0187-762-053. Fax: 0187-762-173. www.ilvigneto5terre.com. Rack rates: 75€–120€ (\$86–\$138) double. Rates include breakfast. AE, MC, V.*

### **Hotel Gianni Franzi**

**\$ Vernazza**

Each of the guest rooms in the new wing of this hotel has a private little garden cut into the cliff, overlooking the sea. The rooms are bright, with whitewashed walls, checkered terracotta floors, and beamed ceilings; the elegant furniture makes up for the fact that guest rooms and bathrooms are small, but you wouldn't expect anything different for a hotel housed in the truly old buildings in the heart of the village.

*Piazza Marconi 5 (note: this is the address of the restaurant where reception is located; the hotel buildings are further up the hill). ☎ and Fax: 0187-821-003. www.giannifranzi.it. Rack rates: 76€ (\$87) double. Rates include continental breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Closed Jan–Mar.*

### **Hotel Marina Piccola**

**\$ Manarola**

Small, bright rooms with a beautiful view at moderate prices. This hotel is the way to go if you want to keep a lid on expenses and can do without air conditioning or an elevator (guest rooms go up to the 5th floor). The iron-work beds and whitewashed walls give a very Mediterranean feeling to the guest rooms; bathrooms are quite small though. The hotel restaurant is excellent (see “Dining locally,” later in this section).

*Via Birolli 120. ☎ and Fax: 0187-920-103. www.hotelmarinapiccola.com. Rack rates: 105€ (\$121) double. Rates include continental breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Closed Jan.*



### **Hotel Pasquale**

**\$\$ Monterosso**

This family-run hotel is right on the beach in the center of town. Each of the rooms offer terrific views above the ocean and coastline. The rooms are medium-sized, with a clean modern look, and most bathrooms have only showers. The common areas include a bar (a real one, with a seating area — not one of those skimpy affairs) that doubles as a restaurant offering local cuisine. The family also owns the Hotel Villa Steno (see later in this section).

Via Fegina 4. ☎ **0187-817-477** or 0187-817-550. Fax: 0187-817-056. [www.pasini.com](http://www.pasini.com). Rack rates: 135€–180€ (\$155–\$207) double. Rates include continental buffet breakfast. AE, MC, V.

**Hotel Porto Roca**  
**\$\$\$ Monterosso**

This is a beautiful luxury hotel offering spectacular views from its high cliff location above town. The luminous guest rooms have whitewashed walls and wooden furniture; they are very spacious and comfortable, and most have large balconies and full baths. The hotel's amenities include a bar, a restaurant with an extensive cellar of Italian wines, a private beach, a beautiful sun terrace, and free parking — a real rarity in this area. The hotel accepts pets for a charge and provides a free car service to the train station. Book early during the high season.

Via Corone 1. ☎ **0187-817-502**. Fax: 0187-817-692. [www.portoroca.it](http://www.portoroca.it). Free parking. Rack rates: 195€–280€ (\$224–\$322) double. Rates include buffet breakfast and use of beach chairs and umbrellas. AE, DC, MC, V. Closed Nov–Mar.

**Hotel Villa Steno**  
**\$\$ Monterosso**

Each room of this family-run modern hotel has a private terrace or small garden, with great views over the sea and the village. Located in the upper part of town, and surrounded by olive and lemon trees, it is unpretentious and offers comfortably appointed guest rooms with a minimalist look and bright white walls. The hotel is run by the same family that owns the Hotel Pasquale (see earlier in this section). Parking is limited, so call on the morning of your arrival and they'll do their best to reserve you a spot.

Via Roma 109. ☎ **0187-817-028** or 0187-818-336. Fax: 0187-817-354. [www.pasini.com](http://www.pasini.com). Free parking. Rack rates: 135€–180€ (\$155–\$207). AE, MC, V.

## **Dining locally**

Being a highly touristy area, you'll want to avoid the few overpriced tourist traps, although the quality of the food is usually adequate. In this section, we give you the best of the good ones. The cuisine of the Cinque Terre is typical Ligurian, with a lot of fresh fish and fresh herbs — such as the basil for the pesto sauce, now famous around the world. See Chapter 2 for more in-depth information about Ligurian cuisine.

**Al Carugio**  
**\$ Monterosso LIGURIAN**

This is a classic Italian restaurant at its best: white linen, good food and wine, perfect service, and moderate prices. You can find all the typical dishes of Ligurian cuisine proudly prepared and served in a friendly atmosphere. Among the *primi*, go for the classic *troffie al pesto* (a rustic sort of linguine traditionally made with chestnut flour), or try their wonderful

*risotto ai frutti di mare* (seafood *risotto*), both delicious; among the *secondi* a must is the *acciughe*, the famous local anchovies, which are prepared *al tegame* (stewed) or *fritte* (fried).

Via S. Pietro 9 ☎ **0187-817-367**. *Reservations recommended. Secondi: 7€–15€ (\$8.05–\$17)*. AE, MC, V. *Open: Lunch and dinner Fri–Wed; closed 4 weeks in Dec, 2 weeks in Jan.*



### **Gambero Rosso**

**\$\$ Vernazza LIGURIAN**

Set in the picturesque square at the heart of town, this is one of the best fish restaurants in town, offering some of the less common local dishes and friendly yet professional service. The *spaghetti alle vongole* is truly excellent, but if you want to try something more typical, then go for the *tian*, the local specialty of oven-roasted anchovies, potatoes, tomatoes, and rosemary. You will also enjoy the complimentary glass of *Sciacchetrà* at the end of the meal (the famous local — and rare — *passito*, a sweet wine).

Piazza Marconi 7. ☎ **0187-811-265**. *Reservations recommended. Secondi: 8€–21€ (\$9.20–\$24)*. AE, DC, MC, V. *Open: Summer, lunch and dinner daily; winter, lunch and dinner Tues–Sun. Closed Jan–Feb.*



### **Marina Piccola**

**\$\$ Manarola FISH**

This unpretentious trattoria of Hotel Marina Piccola is liked by locals and known for its grilled fish. During the high season diners can enjoy wonderful sunsets on the terrace overlooking the sea. All the specialties are excellent, but we do recommend to do as the locals do and gorge on the splendid grilled fish, masterly cooked with garlic and fresh herbs; some of the best are the *spigola alla griglia* or the *San Pietro*.

Via Birolli 120. ☎ **0187-920-103**. [www.hotelmarinapiccola.com](http://www.hotelmarinapiccola.com). *Reservations recommended. Secondi: 9€–21€ (\$10–\$24)*. AE, DC, MC, V. *Open: Lunch and dinner Wed–Mon. Closed mid–Nov–mid–Dec.*



### **Ripa del Sole**

**\$\$ Riomaggiore LIGURIAN**

This new restaurant, run by a brother-and-sister team, offers cooking that's true to the best local tradition with a menu that's certified organic. The warm yellow walls, wood accents, and beautiful linen and real crystal on the table create a sunny atmosphere, a perfect setting to enjoy your meal. The terrace — open for dinner in the high season — is high above the sea and the view is breathtaking. We definitely recommend the antipasto platter, with all the Cinque Terre fish specialties: stuffed mussels and anchovies, marinated octopus and anchovies, *baccalà* (codfish) dumplings.

Via de Gasperi 282, on the mountain side of the village. ☎ **0187-920-143**. [www.ripadelsole.it](http://www.ripadelsole.it). *Reservations recommended. Secondi: 8€–21€ (\$9.20–\$24)*. AE, MC, V. *Open: Summer, lunch and dinner daily; winter, lunch and dinner Tues–Sun. Closed Nov.*

**Ristorante l'Alta Marea****\$\$ Monterosso LIGURIAN**

In the center of town, this lively restaurant offers a casual atmosphere that appeals to younger crowds. Although trendy, the food is as good as in more old-fashioned, traditional restaurants. The delicious *linguine al pesto* is tangy and fresh.

Via Roma 54. ☎ **0187-817-331**. E-mail: [altamarea@monterosso.net](mailto:altamarea@monterosso.net).  
Reservations recommended. Secondi: 9.50€–18€ (\$11–\$21). AE, DC, MC, V. Open: Summer lunch and dinner daily; winter, lunch and dinner Thurs–Tues. Closed Dec.

**Trattoria Gianni Franzi****\$\$ Vernazza LIGURIAN**

Tradition is the key word at Gianni's, where the recipes of Ligurian cuisine are prepared with care and attention to detail and served in a refined surrounding. From late spring to mid-fall you can dine al fresco and enjoy gorgeous sunsets by the sea. You can find all the classics prepared with local fish, herbs, and vegetables; our favorites include a fantastic *zuppa di pesce* and excellent *truffie al pesto* (the linguine is made from chestnut flour); the *ravioli di pesce* (fish ravioli) are very good and so are the local anchovies, stuffed or marinated.

Piazza Marconi 5. ☎ **0187-821-003**. Reservations recommended. Secondi: 9.50€–20€ (\$11–\$23). MC, V. Open: Summer, lunch and dinner daily; winter, lunch, and dinner Thurs–Tues. Closed Jan–Mar.

**Exploring the Cinque Terre**

The National Park of the Cinque Terre was recently declared a World Heritage site by UNESCO. The **Cinque Terre Trail** (see “More fun things to see and do,” later in this section) is the best way to see up close the real attraction of the Cinque Terre: the amazing cliffs, cultivated for centuries using dry stone walling — over 7,000m (21,000 ft.) of it — to build narrow terraces. Vineyards are planted all the way down to the edge of the sea, together with luscious lemon and olive trees. During the harvest, farmers secure themselves with ropes to keep from falling. Progress has come to the area, however, so here and there you may notice small lifts that look something like monorails.

**The top attractions****Corniglia**

The only inland village of the Cinque Terre — though you can reach the sea by way of an old flight of steps — it is also the most agricultural of the villages. The cobblestone streets of Corniglia wind from door to door and to its church, **San Pietro**. Built in 1334 above a chapel from the 11th century, the church was redone during the baroque period, but the Romanic facade, graced with a beautiful rosette, was preserved. The whole town is like a step back in time, and there are several medieval buildings of interest, such as the arched gothic building made of black

stone, believed to have been the postal station of the Fieschi family. Its agricultural tradition goes back millennia: Corniglia was already exporting wine to Pompeii during the Roman period.

### *Manarola*

**Manarola**, a lovely sight from a distance with its gaily colored houses, is a real fisherman's village, still dependent on and closely related to the sea. The village is enclosed in a gorge opening to a small harbor between two rocky cliffs; Manarola contains the 14th-century Romanic **church of San Lorenzo**, highlighted by a splendid rose window. From Manarola starts — or ends — the famous **Via dell'Amore** (love trail), the easiest of the trails joining the villages (see "Riomaggiore," for more information).

### *Monterosso al Mare*

This is the largest of the five villages that compose the Cinque Terre; it's also the only one of the villages to have a nice sandy beach, giving Monterosso the feeling of an old-fashioned seaside resort. It's wonderful for swimming here, even though most of the beach is divided into private swaths for the hotels lining the beachfront. It is also the busiest of the villages, and some say the least authentic. In reality, it is just different: because high cliffs don't surround it on all sides, the old town has seen the growth of a modern section towards the rail station and the beach, called Fegina. But the heart of Monterosso is still beautiful and unspoiled.

The **medieval tower Aurora** separates the modern town from the old; where you'll find the late-Romanic church San Giovanni Battista in black and white stripes with a beautiful rosette on the facade and an elegant portico at back facing the sea. Further up, you'll climb to the other church in town, **San Francesco**, within the complex of the **convent of the Capuchins**. Built in 1619, it is a nice example of Tuscan/Ligurian Gothic in green-and-white-striped marble. Inside you can admire a fine crucifixion attributed to Van Dyck.

### *Riomaggiore*

Like Manarola, fishing is still an important industry in this village. Noteworthy attractions include the **church of San Giovanni Battista**, a fine example of late-Romanic architecture with two beautiful lateral portals from the 14th century. Uniting this village with Manarola is the most famous section of the coastal path: the **Via dell'Amore** (the love trail) — a romantic path which was excavated in the cliff and offers fabulous views. It was closed for more than five years after a landslide and has only recently reopened.

### *Vernazza*

**Vernazza** is a very tiny fishing village with a strong medieval flavor. Dominated by its castle, it was founded around the year 1000. Overlooking the village is the Gothic church of **Santa Margherita di Antiochia**, built in blackstone right on the water with an unusual octagonal bell tower. The fishing harbor offers a fine view over the rest of the bay.



*More cool things to see and do*

- ✓ The **Cinque Terre Trail** (difficulty level: easy) requires five hours — that is, if you are one of those tourists in excellent shape with iron will; otherwise, plan on about six hours, plus any additional time you would want to spend in the villages. We found that the best way to follow this path is to do only part of the trail and travel the rest of the way by train or boat; this way you get the full Cinque Terre experience without getting exhausted. It is also more adapted to a varied party, including children or less fit people. As a national park, walking the trails between one village and the other is no longer free. If you've purchased the recommended **Cinque Terre Card** (see "Getting around," earlier in this section), admission to the trail is free. If not, you can also just pay at the entrance of the section you want to hike. The hike from Riomaggiore to Manarola along the fairly flat stretch known as the **Via dell'Amore** (see section on Riomaggiore), takes only 30 minutes. To this you can add the two sections from Manarola to Corniglia and Corniglia to Vernazza, each taking about 45 minutes. Between Corniglia and Vernazza the trail gives you access to the romantic small sandy beach of **Guvano**, where you can pause for a dive into the clean waters of the park; in Vernazza you can catch the boat to Monterosso. The section of the trail from Vernazza to Monterosso takes about 1½ hours and is quite different, with windy ups and downs, and a precipitous descent into Monterosso. We do not recommend it unless you feel you are fit or you are here for the specific purpose of hiking: it doesn't add anything to your visit except a few more sore muscles!



- Although the easy trail requires you to be only moderately fit, you should go with at least one companion, bring at least a quart of water per person (especially in summer, when it gets very hot), and wear sturdy walking shoes. The trail is along a cliff, and landslides are not uncommon. If you're lucky, during your walk you may see a local farmer standing where you'd think only goats can stand, lovingly tending to one of his plants.
- ✓ Five **Santuari** (churches dedicated to the Madonna) line SS370, the local road between the villages, but they can also be reached on foot or by public transportation, including taxis, from each of the village they overlook. Destination of religious processions, their position — dominating the surrounding countryside and high above the sea — make them fantastic stages for the breathtaking views. Some are more interesting than others. **Nostra Signora di Soviore**, overlooking Monterosso, sports the oldest campanile in Liguria, dating back to the 8th century; the 14th-century facade has an interesting rosette and portal. The area in front of the church offers breathtaking views and is the seat for classical music concerts during the good season (inquire with the local information office for the schedule). **Nostra Signora di Montenero** overlooks Riomaggiore 340m (1120 ft.) above sea level; the church was built in 1335, perhaps over an 8th-century chapel, and the monastery now houses a good restaurant (**Ca' de Cian**; ☎ 0187-920992;

cadecian.tsx.org; reservations necessary. Prix-fixe lunch or dinner: 20€//\$23. American Express accepted. Open: Lunch and dinner Thurs–Sun. Closed Nov–Mar). **Nostra Signora della Salute** in Volastra is a Romanic church with a noteworthy portal and gothic *bifora*, a delicate window with two arches.



- ✓ The sea along the national park is a protected **marine park** which can be best enjoyed with snorkeling and scuba-diving excursions. The **Coopsub Cinque Terre** in Riomaggiore (Via San Giacomo; ☎ 0187-920-011; utenti.lycos.it/diving\_5terre/) is a licensed diving center offering guided excursions and equipment rental. Excursions cost about 22€ (\$25) per person; equipment rental is an extra 17.50€ (\$20).

## Fast Facts: The Cinque Terre

### Area Code

The area code for the Cinque Terre is 0187; use this code when calling from anywhere outside or inside Italy, even within the Cinque Terre (include the 0 every time, even when calling from abroad).

### ATMs

You can exchange money at the Pro loco office in Monterosso (see “Information,” below); there are ATMs in the banks of Monterosso and Vernazza.

### Emergencies

Ambulance ☎ 118, or in Riomaggiore, ☎ 0187-920-777, in Manarola ☎ 0187-920-766, in Monterosso ☎ 0187-817-475, and in Vernazza ☎ 0187-821-078. Fire ☎ 115; road assistance ☎ 116.

### Hospital

The nearest hospital is San Nicolo Levanto, in the town of Levanto, just west of Monterosso al Mare (☎ 0187-800-409); there is also a larger hospital in La Spezia (☎ 0187-5331).

### Information

In Monterosso al Mare, the Pro loco office (tourist office) is at Via Figena 38 (☎ 0187-817-506), open Monday through

Saturday from 10 a.m. to noon and 5:00 to 7:30 p.m. and Sunday 10 a.m. to noon.

From June through September, there’s an additional office on Via del Molo (☎ 0187-817-204), which is open the same hours. A tourist office can be found inside the train stations of each of the villages:

Monterosso (☎ 0187-817-059), Corniglia (☎ 0187-812-523), Vernazza (☎ 0187-812-533), Manarola (☎ 0187-760-511), and Riomaggiore (☎ 0187-760-091).

### Internet Access

Located in Monterosso is The Net (Via Vittorio Emanuele 55; ☎ 0187-817-288; e-mail: info@monterosso.net.com).

### Police

There are two police forces in Italy; call either one. For the Polizia, call ☎ 113; for the Carabinieri, call ☎ 112.

### Post Office

The main post office for the area is in Monterosso al Mare, on Piazza Garibaldi, in the center of town.