

Pacific Rim Alliance

Italy 2014

March 8–20, 2014



Current Status

Well a bunch of changes have popped up in the past few months. We have worked diligently to keep the status quo. We've been out of the country (off and on) for the past two months so it's been a challenge.

Our tour operator changed companies. So after a new round of bids, we too changed companies.

Our original bid was quoted at an exchange rate of 0.76 Euros. Unfortunately, the USD has been dropping against the Euro so the new pricing is based on 0.73 Euros.

Our hotel in Sestriere remains unchanged at the 4-star Hotel Cristallo with breakfast and dinner included.

Many of the hotels & businesses in Cinque Terre do not open until Spring. The new option is to stay in Rapallo at the 4-star Hotel Europa. Rapallo is about 90 km [56 miles] from Cinque Terre and 5 km [3 miles] from Portofino. To go from Rapallo to Cinque Terre, we'll take the train to Riomaggiore, the farthest village, which takes about an hour.



Swiss Air

We are recommending that participants purchase their own air. You must be on the Swiss air flight from Zurich to/from Milan so that you can catch up with our ground transportation. Flights are as follows—

San Francisco (SFO)

Outbound

Sat. 03.08.2014	LX 39	19:25 SFO - 15:40 ZRH
Sun. 03.09.2014	LX 1622	17:00 ZRH - 17:55 MXP

Inbound

Thur. 03.20.2014	LX 1617	11:10 MXP - 12:10 ZRH
Thur. 03.20.2014	LX 38	13:05 ZRH - 17:25 SFO

Los Angeles (LAX)

Outbound

Sat. 03.08.2014	LX 41	19:25 LAX - 15:50 ZRH
Sun. 03.09.2014	LX 1622	17:00 ZRH - 17:55 MXP

Inbound

Thur. 03.20.2014	LX 1617	11:10 MXP - 12:10 ZRH
Thur. 03.20.2014	LX 40	13:15 ZRH - 17:55 LAX

At this time, the round trip air price is around \$1,150 (includes all taxes) and you can reserve your own seats and not be at the mercy of the tour operator. Flights are available from San Diego through San Francisco for an additional \$100.

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historical center, and good seafood restaurants. Don't miss the funicular ride up the hill to Montallegro.

Rapallo is on the Italian Riviera in the Liguria region of northwest Italy. It's in the Tigullio Gulf between Genoa and the popular Cinque Terre. Rapallo makes a good base for visiting the rest of the Italian Riviera and Cinque Terre as it's well connected.

Rapallo is on the coastal rail line that runs from Ventimiglia (near the French border) to Rome. The train station is centrally located.

Funivia Ride to Montallegro



The spectacular ride up the hill to Montallegro on the funivia takes eight minutes. It leaves every half hour between 9:00 - 12:00 and 2:00pm - 5:00pm from Piazza Solari. The cable is 2,349 meters long and ascends 600 meters to Montallegro where there are beautiful views of the gulf and the hills.

At the top is the large Sanctuary of Montallegro, built in 1558 to commemorate a picture left by the Virgin when she appeared to a peasant. Its marble facade was added in 1896. On the walls inside are many offerings, mostly for miracles at sea. There are also two hotels, both with restaurants open for both lunch and dinner. Several hiking trails start from Montallegro.

Europa Hotel Design Spa 1877

Via Milite Ignoto 2, Rapallo, Genova, 16035, Italy,
+39 0185 669521

The Hotel Europa Design Spa 1877, an elegant four-star hotel, is located in the historical center of Rapallo, across

from Rapallo Castle and a few steps from the beach. It is a 5-minute walk from the Rapallo Train Station and near the dock for boats along the coast and to the Cinque Terre.

The hotel has an excellent restaurant offering local cuisine. A buffet breakfast is served each morning and the hotel's restaurant has its own garden. You will also find a lounge bar, a brand new spa and fitness center..

Europa Hotel Amenities Include

- Free Wi-Fi
- Restaurant
- Bar/lounge
- Room service
- Full-service health spa
- Sauna
- 24-hour front desk
- Concierge services
- Currency exchange
- Dry cleaning/laundry service
- Laundry facilities
- Elevator/lift
- Garden
- Mini-bar
- Hair dryer
- 21-inch LCD TV
- Satellite TV channels
- Daily housekeeping
- In-room safe



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Cinque Terre

Designated by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site Cinque Terre forms a National Park.

Colorful houses clinging to rocky outcrops overhanging the sea and the terraced vineyards, which produce excellent wines such as Sciacchetrà are part of Cinque Terre's fascinating landscape.



Plan to spend at least a full day visiting Cinque Terre, especially if you are hiking between the villages. When you get off the train at Riomaggiore, you will find a tourist information window outside the station, where you can ask for a map. If you want to do the hike, you will climb some stairs to the starting point, where you will buy your ticket (€5).

Before starting the hike, be sure to visit this fascinating village. You can either take a short walk through the tunnel from the train station or wander around the side of the cliff, which offers a spectacular view of the harbor and sea. If you have difficulty with stairs, be sure to take the tunnel. For a treat, stop for lunch at one of the cafés overlooking the harbor. You can also find picnic fixings in some of the shops and have lunch along the seaside.

If you don't have time to visit all the villages, be sure to make a stop in Vernazza. This scenic village has a lovely harbor and beach, a delightful place to stop at a café for a glass of wine, some ice cream or a meal. You can also climb up the cliff to visit an old castle and enjoy the view of the sea and the town below.

Note that when you buy your train tickets to and from Riomaggiore, you can use them for up to six hours from the time you validate them.

There are the five towns referenced to by 'Cinque Terra.'

Riomaggiore

From the south, Riomaggiore is the closest village to La Spezia, a vibrant and colorful town. The village has narrow streets and pretty buildings that treat visitors with old Italian hospitality and charm and amazing seaside views.

Manarola

One of the best known views of Cinque Terre are the one that are enjoyed on the path that leads to the village of Manarola from Riomaggiore with flourishing undergrowth, sweeping beaches and overhanging rocks. The village of Manarola is peaceful, pleasant and picturesque. It offers a little more cosmopolitan feel with a sprinkle of restaurants and bars overlooking the sea. The pastel colored houses and fishermen boats are just as charming.

Corniglia

The quietest village in Cinque Terre is Corniglia and it is the only one that is located above the sea level. This beautiful village offers locals a private hideaway as it is sheltered high. This little gem can be reached by the bus or the train after a challenging walk.

Vernazza



Vernazza is known to be the most captivating, bustling and bright of all the Cinque Terre villages. It offers waterfront cafes, quaint shops and a small harbor filled with immense charm.

Vernazza has a very casual, elegant and jovial atmosphere and is the perfect location to enjoy a delicious lunch or just sit and enjoy the postcard style breath-taking views.

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Monterosso al Mare



The last in the Cinque Terre villages is the village of Monterosso al Mare, the most modernized and the largest of all five villages. It is the only village in the region that resembles a resort town and this is where the most beautiful beaches and the finest hotels can be found. Monterosso is known for its beautiful seaside promenade, its innumerable gelato parlors, its uphill streets and its trinket stalls that make an evening walk pleasurable.

Portofino



Portofino is a little more cosmopolitan than the Cinque Terre region but does not lose its rustic Italian feel. There is a reason this town is so popular and visited by so many, a quaint little fishing village tucked in the hillside, which is dotted with colorful buildings – it had every one with their camera capturing its beauty.

The town itself is filled with restaurants and amongst the cobbled streets there is plenty of opportunity to shop – but bring your credit card – some of the most popular

designers have outlets here.

If you want to head out of the town for a nice walk or run there is a great footpath that runs along the coast into the next town of Santa Margarita. There are a couple of beaches along the way with cafes and bars and in Santa Margarita itself there is a small marina and some larger more commercial stores.

Travel Tips

- Cafés and restaurants in Italy have a cover charge for table service. The fee is generally about €1.50 per person, but runs around €3 in some places like Portofino, a more popular spot on the Italian Riviera. In fact, everything in Portofino costs a lot more, so if you're trying to save money, don't plan to eat here.
- Be sure to stroll up the hill above Portofino to visit the Church of St. George and Castello Brown. If you still have any energy, hike out to the lighthouse.
- Buying train tickets in smaller Italian towns can be a challenge if you don't speak the language. If you're lucky, you can find another person in line that speaks English and will help you translate. Otherwise, you can write down the name of the town where you're going. If the ticket window is closed, you can use the machine, which offers information in English, but you will need a credit card with chip and PIN technology.
- Before boarding the train, you must validate your ticket by placing it in the small device usually found just outside the ticket office. If you present a ticket that hasn't been validated to the conductor, you could be thrown off the train and face an expensive fine.
- Be sure to try pansotti cum salsa di noci, a specialty of the Ligurian region recommended by someone who grew up in the area. It's a mild ravioli-like pasta with walnut sauce, and it's delicious.

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Insurance is Highly Recommended

Health, accident, luggage and trip-interruption insurance IS HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.

Insurance Option 1— Travel Protectors

You can buy an insurance policy directly from Travel Protectors at <http://www.travelprotectors.com/> or call them at [877] 515-9055.

As an insurance broker, Travel Protectors offers travel insurance plans for several reliable travel insurance companies, all of which they have worked with for several years.

Insurance Option 2— Travel Guard™

You can buy an insurance policy directly from Travel Guard at <http://www.travelguard.com/> or call them at [800] 826-4919.

Travel Guard offers a range of products that can be tailored to the type of trip you are going on. Plans may include valuable medical coverage, trip cancellation/interruption due to work reasons and involuntary job loss, theft or loss of baggage and personal effects, flight accident coverage, 24/7 assistance services and more!

Some plans now include increased coverage limits for emergency evacuation and medical expense! Their travel plans can include coverage for backpackers, expatriates, luggage, missionaries, skiing travel and more.

Insurance Option 3— CSA

You can buy an insurance policy directly from CSA at <http://www.csatravelprotection.com/> or call them at [800] 348-9505.

CSA Travel Protection, a Europ Assistance company, is dedicated to providing valuable travel insurance, emergency assistance services, and peace of mind one deserves while traveling. CSA has developed a reputation for standing behind its customers and by offering products and services to meet their needs.

Through excellent customer service, extensive experience and industry-leading innovation, CSA is with its clients every step of the way, whenever and wherever they are needed. Trip Cancellation Protects your travel investment if you cancel your trip for a covered reason.

Insurance Option 4—

You can always research and buy your own insurance or choose not to have the coverage.

