



GENOVA | ITALY

Curated by Natasha

A FEW THINGS TO KNOW (IN MY HUMBLE OPINION)



How to get there?

Genova is a part of the Ligurian Region of Italy. The easiest way to fly in is to Milan and then catch a direct train from Milano Centrale to Genova Piazza Principe. The fare varies depending on the time of day (14-28 Eu) and around 1h40. You can also fly to Rome and train to Genova, but it is much longer and more expensive. I really enjoy hiring a car and driving there- it's beautiful both ways :)



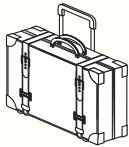
How does the currency fare to Rands?

The local currency is Euro. And the prices are typical for European cities - it is pricey to eat out, however there are beautiful markets and street vendors that sell healthy and fresh Italian food. A Flat White will be 2-3 Euro - standard for European Cities.



When is the best time of year to go?

The summer months are typically May-Sept. However, I love the off-season times - April and October. The prices are lower, it's not as hot and there are not as many people. BUT, It is super rainy in Genova in the winter, so if you don't like rain, don't say I didn't warn you!



Any tips for packing?

Genova has cobbled streets everywhere! Be wary of packing too many things in massive bags. Most of the airbnb's I have stayed in have not had elevators. And so carrying your bags up the stairs is a reality :). Bear that in mind. Also, take closed shoes (preferably not white), the streets are pretty dirty (The Genovese are not the best with toilet training their dogs!)



My Genoa Story

I have had a very long affair with Genova. The first time I was in Genova was in 2012 when I was there to work on a Superyacht for a few weeks. I didn't like it. And in fact, when I had to go back there in 2018, I wasn't too excited. My first impression was it was dirty and dangerous and not really the best representation of the Italy I had always heard of. However, when I landed in 2018 and spent a good 4 months there, I started to fall in love with it. You have to put your walking shoes on and lift your eyes. The streets are filled with art and colorful characters, there is music playing everywhere and the food scene is incredible. Not only that, but it is a central place to be based if you want to experience all aspects of Italy - Tuscan Wine country, Italian coast, Italian city, Italian food, Italian architecture, and culture - ALL THE THINGS! Since 2018, I have been there every single year for at least 3 months at a time. We have a deep connection, Genova and me.

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WHERE I STAYED....



LIGURIAN ACCOMODATION

Most of my time in Genova I have been lucky enough to be accommodated by my work in Port. However, for the times I have needed an escape, I have stayed here:

MELIA HOTEL

When I needed a little bit of luxury and a very comfortable bed, I would escape to the soft sheets and deep bathtubs in the Melia Hotel. Located in a leafy residential area of Genova, Carignano, this hotel is far quieter and more relaxed than its counterparts in the center. The on-site restaurant is good and there is a gym and wellness center, for those who enjoy starting their day off that way. It is within walking distance of the historical center and so still central in location. A great bonus is it is so close to the beautiful promenade, where evening strolls are festive and popular.

HOTEL BRISTOL PALACE

This is palatial and grand, with the staircase stealing the show as soon as you pass reception. The rooms are decorated with grandeur in mind and have beautiful light and spaciousness at the forefront. They are big and airy. This hotel is on one of the busiest streets in Genova, Via Settembre XX, which means it is not quiet and bustles all day long. However, it is certainly at the heart of some of Genova's most beautiful offerings - the Carlo Felice Teatro, Piazza de Ferrari, Via Garibaldi and Christopher Columbus's house

Going further along the coast, I highly recommend:

Nervi: [L'Ocanda Villa Moderna](#)

Camogli: [Soffi Del Mare](#)

Vernazza: [Cade Ventu](#) (Cinque Terre Upper path)

Riomaggiore: [Amazing airbnb](#)

WHERE I ATE....



COFFEE

My Favorite coffee shop is Tazze Pazze, it is located close to the Port. It is a delicious coffee establishment, where a wonderful selection of Hlp Genovese locals and tourists alike bustle to the window and small cafe interior for the morning and afternoon fix. The coffee is so good and I spent many days sitting at the tables in the piazza adjacent to the shop, reading, journaling, and soaking up the sun. My favorite snack there is their delicious banana bread, but try them all! They are very innovative with their coffee sides.



RESTAURANTS

For those of you who don't know this, Genova is all about the Pesto, Foccacia, and Trofie. The most popular restaurant to try these delights is in fact Cavour 21. If you don't go early enough, you will find yourself standing in a very festive queue.

Other Recommendations:

I made the most amazing friend in Genova, called Sarah (our story on the last page) and she has given me her top 3 restaurants in and around Genova. She has lived there for 4 years:

1. Mangiabuono (Genova Centro)
2. Ostaia da U santu (Voltri)
3. Osteria dell'acquasanta (Acquasanta)

Some of my favorites:

1. Cucina Valoria (Story on next page)
2. Manitoba Pizzeria
3. Broadside Sushi
4. Il Marin (fine dining and exceptional service!)
5. Taverna Zaccaria
6. Lo Stram Burger (amazing veggie burgers with Gluten-free bun option)
7. Capo Santa Chiaro (Fine dining and BEAUTIFUL location)

WHERE I ATE....

MY FAVORITE FOOD EXPERIENCE

Cucina Valoria

In 2018, I spent a lot of time alone and so, finding spaces, where I felt comfortable eating alone with my journal or book, was important to me. One day, when strolling around the historical district in the rain, I walked down Via Valoria and stumbled across this amazing restaurant, Cucina Valoria. I made myself comfortable and tried their delicious Polpo/Octopus (another Ligurian specialty). The chef was so present in the restaurant and he came to my table often to check on me and see if I was happy. We got chatting in broken Italian/English and I really enjoyed my meal there. I went back a couple of times and always loved it. Davide, the head chef, and I started to become good friends. I got to know a few of the surrounding locals and every year I went back, Cucina Valoria was my first stop for dinner. In 2021, during the pandemic, Davide and I shared some good conversations as he battled against the closing of restaurants throughout the country. He is kind, his food is amazing and I highly recommend going there. When you go, please tell him "Natasha says hi".



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THE BARS I LOVED....



BARS

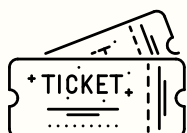
Summer in Italy is all about the Aperol Spritz and aperitif. So finding the most beautiful bar in the sun, where you can spend hours in good company, listening to live music and soaking up the atmosphere is the Italian Way.

My friend, Sarah, would pick me up on her scooter after work and we would go and chase the sundown for the perfect aperitif. These are some of the gems we found:

1. La Mandragola
2. Bagni Santa Chiara
3. Just Peruzzi
4. Ai Troeggi
5. Antica Osteria Dindi
6. Les Rouges Cucina and Cocktails (epic cocktail menu! and beautiful venue)

Sarah's Top 3: Close to mine :)

1. Giardini Luzzati (for all the concerts and markets)
2. Zaccaria (beautiful little piazza, sitting on the chairs in front of a church)
3. Les rouge (beautiful old palazzo with the best cocktails in town)



CONCERTS & ENTERTAINMENT:

1. Teatro Carlo Felice
2. Via Garibaldi - all the museums on this street are worth walking around.
3. Christopher Columbus' house
4. Red Yoga (lovely yoga studio!)
5. The beaches! If you are there in Summer - jump on the train and head to the beaches!
6. A big part of Genova's beauty is finding a piazza and parking off for the afternoon/evening - enjoying the entertainment, the food and drink, and basking in the sun.

WHAT DID I GET UP TO?



ACTIVITIES:

A frequent activity for me was to head up to Righi and go for a beautiful hike. From there you can walk above the city and get the most spectacular views of Genova, as well as visit the Forts and restaurants around the park. There is a Funicular that goes from Zecca to Righi. A lot of my friends have raved about the pizza restaurant, up there too and while I have not tried it, apparently it is a must-do. The funicular route itself is really fun and scenic.

Also, most mornings I would run along the Corso Italia, it is such a beautiful stretch that gives you views from coast to coast. I try to run all the way to Bocadasse and get the sun coming up along the colorful coastal homes. It is truly spectacular. The promenade is hard though, so if you struggle with your knees, be careful running there. Righi is probably better :)

On my weekends, I would try to venture out of the city and head down to the coastal villages, there are so many beautiful beaches and villages so close by and of course, Cinque Terre is a hop, skip and jump along the coastline - a simple train from Genova to La Spezia will get you on the trail in 2hrs.

Close by seaside villages to visit:

Nervi

Bogliasco

Punta Chiappa

Sestri Levante

Recco

Camogli

I have done many hikes in Genova, but one of my favorites is the hike from San Rocco to San Fruttuosa. The beginning of the trail is a little hard to find, but once you are on it and you follow the path, it is pretty easy to do. The views are epic and you go through little enclaves of small holding homes and a really beautiful guesthouse, called BBQ Lodge, offers such beautiful views and a lovely place for a drink on the way. My advice, stop at all the panoramic bars for a drink and then when you get down to San Fruttuoso, indulge at the beautiful seafood restaurant, da Giorgio. The little bay of San Fruttuoso is tiny and surrounded by a beautiful monastery. It is exceptionally beautiful to witness. And by the end of the day, if you have had one too many drinks at my suggested stops, you can always grab a ferry boat back to Genova Port.

I am actually finding it really hard to keep this concise. I have so much to say about Genova :)

MY PERFECT DAY IN GENOVA ITSELF



MY STORY WITH BEAUTIFUL SARAH

In 2018, when i was living in Genova, for an extended period of time, I had signed up to a couple of months at RedYoga and was loving the classes. I would walk every day for 40 mins to get to the studio, do a 90 minute class and then walk home. It was a beautiful time for me. Work was particularly stressful and so this was a wonderful form of meditation. Even though the classes were mostly in Italian, I was loving the studio.

In one of the classes, we were practising headstands and then girl next to me was looking a little frustrated by her headstand. I offered her some of the advice that had been given to me and helped her a little. She had this amazing smile that stretched right to her eyes. She was super grateful and spoke a little english. After the class, she came to find me, as I bundled up in all my layers of coats and asked if I wanted to go for a coffee.

Immediately we clicked. And from that day, she has been my Genovese sister. We have gone through many things together, we have done many day trips and even weekend trips to different parts of Italy. I know her heart story and she knows mine. And so, her suggestions in this book are included because I trust her and the way she has opened up Genova for me!

A Day in Genova

For me, a really special day would be:

I would start my day with a sunrise run up in Righi, an hour trail out and back along the contour path, watching on the way back as Genova starts to wake up. And then I would head back into the centre for my morning coffee and possibly a sneaky piece of delicious banana bread from Tazze Pазze. If it was a beautiful day, I would wander up to Piazza De Ferrari and take in the atmosphere and live music, see whatever live actors/musicians were out and about. If it was raining, I would take cover in the exceptional museums, either on Via Garibaldi or in Piazza De Ferrari. However, if the sun was out, I would catch a train and head to Camogli for some sun and a small walk up to the peak. I would then grab another small snack and sit on the beach, have a swim and slowly make my way back towards Genova, stopping at Bagni Santa Chiara with Sarah for an Aperol. As the sunset, we would be surrounded by the beauty of the ocean crashing right beneath us and the sunset glowing off all of the buildings around us. And then, of course, dinner at Cucina Valoria, where David would spoil me with his irresistible menu and a glass of red wine. If I still had energy my night would end at Ai Troeggi for a glass of Amber wine and a chat.

But contact me, because I could write many 'ideal days'.

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