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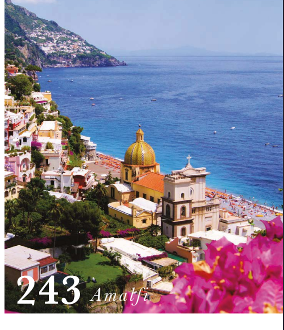

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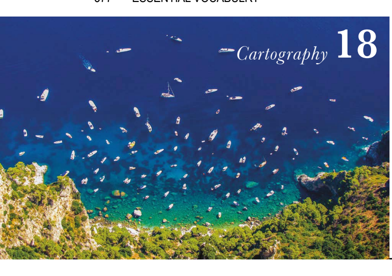

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Ligurian Sea & Tyrrhenian Sea

The blue of the water of one of the most beautiful seas in Italy laps the coastline, made up of rocks, scrub, and pastel colours of the hundred countries proud of the Ligurian maritime tradition. Behind them, the hills – at times barren or silvery-green due to its olive trees - rise steeply towards the Apennines separating Liguria from the other northern regions.
(Anonymous)

Ligurian Sea

Stretching to the south in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea, the Italian peninsula divides "Mare Nostrum" (a Latin name meaning "Our Sea"), into its eastern and western sections. The Ligurian Sea is the northernmost part of the western "Mare Nostrum". It has a vaguely semi-circular shape, **bordered to the north by the Italo-French coastline (and the Principality of Monaco) and to the south, by a line connecting Piombino to the northernmost point of Corsica, Cape Corse ("the Sacred Promontory"), roughly the 43rd parallel, from which the line then continues to the French Hyères Islands.** These are the boundaries provided by the **Italian National Meteorological Service (NMS) and used when reading Meteomar reports (weather forecasts at sea)**. For Météo-France as well as for the International Hydrographic Organisation (IHO), this sea has a somewhat different shape. However, for the sake of clarity and simplification, we will follow the Italian description.

It is, in any case, a sea largely surrounded by submerged lands, **often with considerable mountain elevations near the coastline.** It has got only two corridors leading to other seas, towards the south-west (SW) and south-east (SE) respectively, with Corsica acting as the separation line between these two exits. Later on, we will see how these physical features impact the wind and wave patterns of this basin. If we took all the water out from the Ligurian Sea, we would see that the western portion of this sea is an extension of the great abyssal plain that characterises the Corsican Sea, with a flat and uniform seabed as deep as around 2,500 metres (8,200 feet).

Along the coasts of this area, from the French Islands of Hyères to Cape Mele, the continental shelf is rarely even 10 miles wide, and then plunges quickly to the 2,000 metres (6,561 feet) bathymetric contour line along a steep escarpment. To the

Vernazza, Cinque Terre

east of a line between Cape Corse and Genoa, we can observe instead the presence of a vast continental shelf, accompanied by the presence of some isolated seamounts. The geological origins of the Ligurian Sea are closely linked to those of the Tyrrhenian Sea and to the Sardinia-Corsica Microplate (SCM) supporting these two islands. It is believed that this small plate broke away from Spain and France about twenty million years ago, and from there, slowly moved towards the south-east, turning counter-clockwise, until it achieved its current position 6 to 7 million years ago.

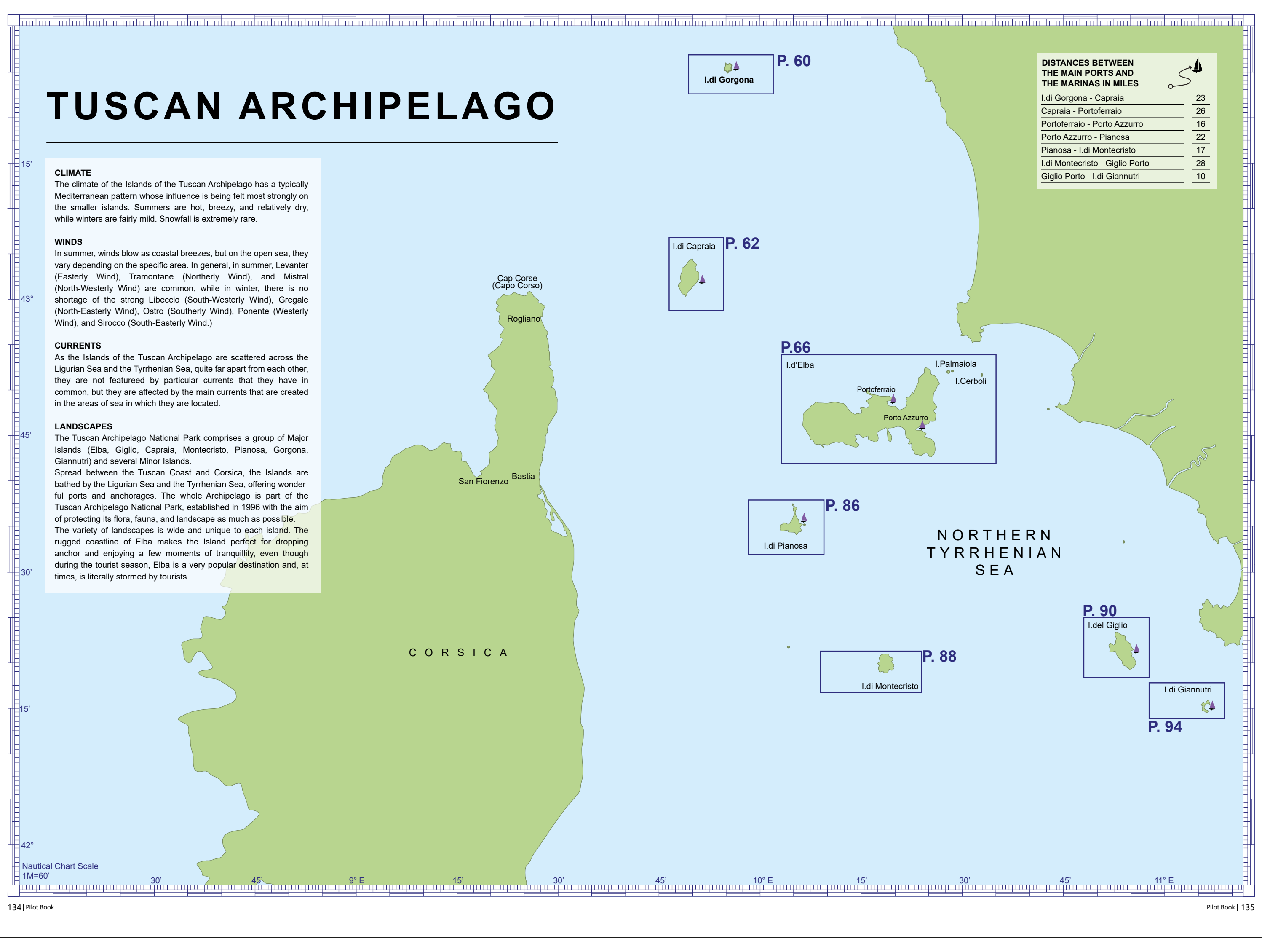
Currents

In the northernmost part of the Ligurian Sea, the offshore current generally turns counter-clockwise, proceeding from the east coast to the west coast. This stream, if it meets the one going up North along the west coast of Corsica, merges into it to continue together the counter-clockwise turn of the coasts of the western Mediterranean, giving origin to the Ligurian-Provençal current. The greater flow of current entering the Ligurian Sea goes back through the Corsica Channel coming from the Tyrrhenian Sea. Along the Tuscan coastline, to the northern part of the Island of Elba, one can observe a counter-current towards the South, originating from a small vortex originating undercurrent below these two islands. However, along the French coast and on the Corsican shore, the situation described at the beginning of this paragraph can easily be complicated: as a result of strong influences from the western quadrants, 3rd and 4th, such as the Mistral (North-West Wind), the Ponente (West Wind) and also the Libeccio (South-West Wind), we often observe a current that goes back to the North-West, and that then turns to the South when it meets the above-mentioned branch, coming from the Tyrrhenian Sea. These strong western influences can also create a current towards the East along the southern border of the Ligurian Sea, which forks crashing on Corsica, lapping the northern coast towards east-north-east and the west coast to the south.

Winds

The particular shape of the Ligurian Sea means that even the dominant winds take on unique behaviours in different parts of the region, sometimes disappearing almost completely. Using the city of Genoa as the centre point of the semi-circular northern shore of the Ligurian Sea, we then refer to the "riviera di ponente" ("western shore") to the west of Genoa and the "riviera di levante" ("eastern shore") to the east of Genoa. The further we move along in one of these directions from Genoa, the more the differences between the coasts increase. In a very general way, it could be said that in winter, northern winds predominate, while in summer, are predominant those from the southern quadrants. "Quadrants", because in the mornings, winds tend to be from the southeast, while in the afternoons, they turn to south-west. With the above qualifications in mind, studying the Wind Rose

Genoa Harbour



DISTANCES BETWEEN THE MAIN PORTS AND THE MARINAS IN MILES	
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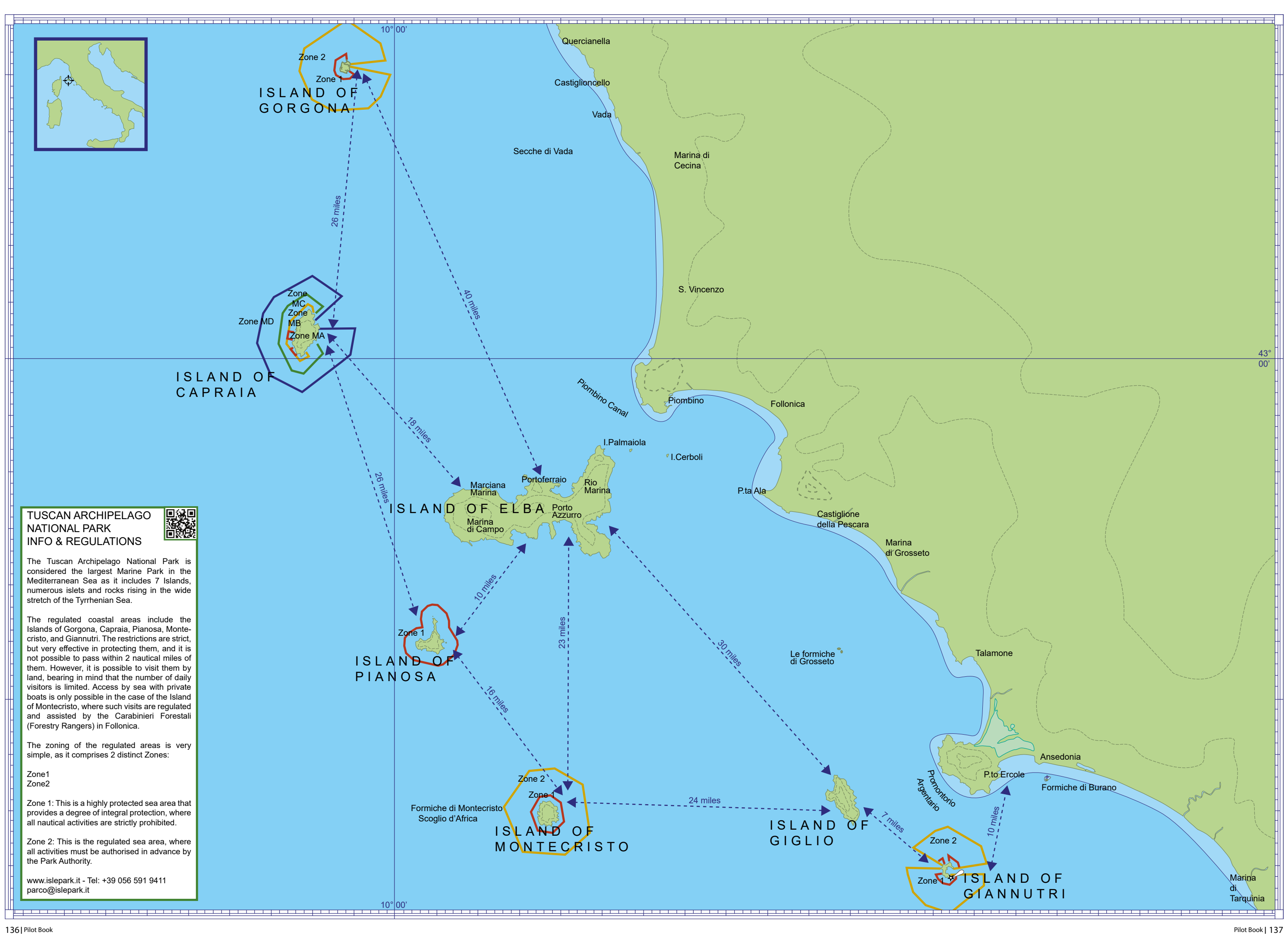
Pianosa - I.di Montecristo	17
I.di Montecristo - Giglio Porto	28
Giglio Porto - I.di Giannutri	10

CLIMATE
The climate of the Islands of the Tuscan Archipelago has a typically Mediterranean pattern whose influence is being felt most strongly on the smaller islands. Summers are hot, breezy, and relatively dry, while winters are fairly mild. Snowfall is extremely rare.

WINDS
In summer, winds blow as coastal breezes, but on the open sea, they vary depending on the specific area. In general, in summer, Levanter (Easterly Wind), Tramontane (Northerly Wind), and Mistral (North-Westerly Wind) are common, while in winter, there is no shortage of the strong Libeccio (South-Westerly Wind), Gregale (North-Easterly Wind), Ostro (Southerly Wind), Ponente (Westerly Wind), and Sirocco (South-Easterly Wind.)

CURRENTS
As the Islands of the Tuscan Archipelago are scattered across the Ligurian Sea and the Tyrrhenian Sea, quite far apart from each other, they are not featured by particular currents that they have in common, but they are affected by the main currents that are created in the areas of sea in which they are located.

LANDSCAPES
The Tuscan Archipelago National Park comprises a group of Major Islands (Elba, Giglio, Capraia, Montecristo, Pianosa, Gorgona, Giannutri) and several Minor Islands.
Spread between the Tuscan Coast and Corsica, the Islands are bathed by the Ligurian Sea and the Tyrrhenian Sea, offering wonderful ports and anchorages. The whole Archipelago is part of the Tuscan Archipelago National Park, established in 1996 with the aim of protecting its flora, fauna, and landscape as much as possible.
The variety of landscapes is wide and unique to each island. The rugged coastline of Elba makes the Island perfect for dropping anchor and enjoying a few moments of tranquillity, even though during the tourist season, Elba is a very popular destination and, at times, is literally stormed by tourists.



TUSCAN ARCHIPELAGO NATIONAL PARK INFO & REGULATIONS

The Tuscan Archipelago National Park is considered the largest Marine Park in the Mediterranean Sea as it includes 7 Islands, numerous islets and rocks rising in the wide stretch of the Tyrrhenian Sea.

The regulated coastal areas include the Islands of Gorgona, Capraia, Pianosa, Montecristo, and Giannutri. The restrictions are strict, but very effective in protecting them, and it is not possible to pass within 2 nautical miles of them. However, it is possible to visit them by land, bearing in mind that the number of daily visitors is limited. Access by sea with private boats is only possible in the case of the Island of Montecristo, where such visits are regulated and assisted by the Carabinieri Forestali (Forestry Rangers) in Follonica.

The zoning of the regulated areas is very simple, as it comprises 2 distinct Zones:

Zone1
Zone2

Zone 1: This is a highly protected sea area that provides a degree of integral protection, where all nautical activities are strictly prohibited.

Zone 2: This is the regulated sea area, where all activities must be authorised in advance by the Park Authority.

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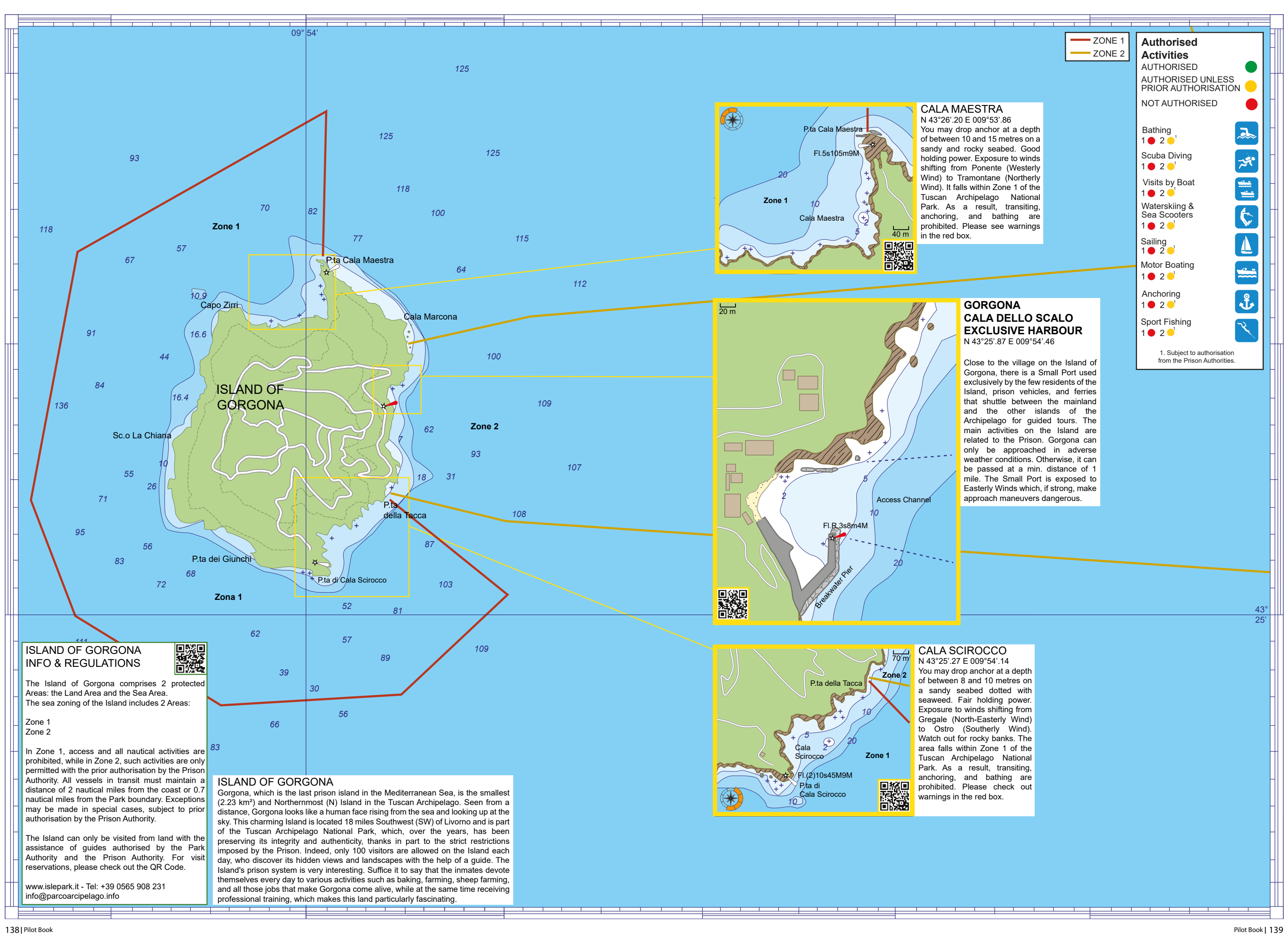
LIGURIAN SEA



Authorised Activities
AUTHORISED
AUTHORISED UNLESS PRIOR AUTHORISATION
NOT AUTHORISED

Bathing 1 2
Scuba Diving 1 2
Visits by Boat 1 2
Waterskiing & Sea Scooters 1 2
Sailing 1 2
Motor Boating 1 2
Anchoring 1 2
Sport Fishing 1 2

1. Subject to authorisation from the Prison Authorities.

CALA MAESTRA
N 43°26'.20 E 009°53'.86
You may drop anchor at a depth of between 10 and 15 metres on a sandy and rocky seabed. Good holding power. Exposure to winds shifting from Ponente (Westerly Wind) to Tramontane (Northerly Wind). It falls within Zone 1 of the Tuscan Archipelago National Park. As a result, transiting, anchoring, and bathing are prohibited. Please see warnings in the red box.

GORGONA
CALA DELLO SCALO
EXCLUSIVE HARBOUR
N 43°25'.87 E 009°54'.46

Close to the village on the Island of Gorgona, there is a Small Port used exclusively by the few residents of the Island, prison vehicles, and ferries that shuttle between the mainland and the other islands of the Archipelago for guided tours. The main activities on the Island are related to the Prison. Gorgona can only be approached in adverse weather conditions. Otherwise, it can be passed at a min. distance of 1 mile. The Small Port is exposed to Easterly Winds which, if strong, make approach maneuvers dangerous.

CALA SCIROCCO
N 43°25'.27 E 009°54'.14
You may drop anchor at a depth of between 8 and 10 metres on a sandy seabed dotted with seaweed. Fair holding power. Exposure to winds shifting from Gregale (North-Easterly Wind) to Ostro (Southerly Wind). Watch out for rocky banks. The area falls within Zone 1 of the Tuscan Archipelago National Park. As a result, transiting, anchoring, and bathing are prohibited. Please check out warnings in the red box.

ISLAND OF GORGONA INFO & REGULATIONS

The Island of Gorgona comprises 2 protected Areas: the Land Area and the Sea Area.
The sea zoning of the Island includes 2 Areas:

Zone 1
Zone 2

In Zone 1, access and all nautical activities are prohibited, while in Zone 2, such activities are only permitted with the prior authorisation by the Prison Authority. All vessels in transit must maintain a distance of 2 nautical miles from the coast or 0.7 nautical miles from the Park boundary. Exceptions may be made in special cases, subject to prior authorisation by the Prison Authority.

The Island can only be visited from land with the assistance of guides authorised by the Park Authority and the Prison Authority. For visit reservations, please check out the QR Code.

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ISLAND OF GORGONA
Gorgona, which is the last prison island in the Mediterranean Sea, is the smallest (2.23 km²) and Northernmost (N) Island in the Tuscan Archipelago. Seen from a distance, Gorgona looks like a human face rising from the sea and looking up at the sky. This charming Island is located 18 miles Southwest (SW) of Livorno and is part of the Tuscan Archipelago National Park, which, over the years, has been preserving its integrity and authenticity, thanks in part to the strict restrictions imposed by the Prison. Indeed, only 100 visitors are allowed on the Island each day, who discover its hidden views and landscapes with the help of a guide. The Island's prison system is very interesting. Suffice it to say that the inmates devote themselves every day to various activities such as baking, farming, sheep farming, and all those jobs that make Gorgona come alive, while at the same time receiving professional training, which makes this land particularly fascinating.

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LIGURIAN SEA

Liguria

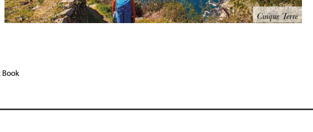
Genoa

1) A WALK THROUGH GENOA'S *CARUGGI*

Genoa the Superb is a port that made history and whose charm and prestige has remained intact, thanks to its *caruggi* (alleys), squares and royal palaces, especially in **Via Garibaldi**. Do not miss the renowned **Aquarium of Genoa, St. Lawrence Cathedral**, the **Royal Palace**, and the **Porta Soprana Towers**. For a walk at dusk, **Corso Italia** leads to the enchanting neighbourhood of **Boccadasse**. If you are never tired of the sea, **la Lanterna** (the main lighthouse of the port, which became the symbol of the city) and the **Galata Museum of the Sea** deserve a visit. If you are looking for a breath-taking view, check out the **Spianata Castelletto** and the **Ascensore di Castelletto Levante** (elevator).

2) V.I.P. DAY IN PORTOFINO

For a visit in the name of *chic*, take a walk along the alleys of Portofino, former fishermen's village, now turned into a seaside resort for luxury lovers. Healthy walks will reward you with charming landscapes. Visit the **Brown Castle**, the **Portofino Lighthouse** and **St. George's Church**. There are many activities offered in the **Marine Protected Area**: kayak, paddleboarding and camping. If you are a lover of **night life**, Portofino is the place for you.



Cinque Terre

3) THE TIMELESS BEAUTY OF THE CINQUE TERRE

The **National Park of the Cinque Terre** (UNESCO Heritage) comprises five fascinating marine villages, built next to each other on the rugged coastline of the Ligurian Riviera: **Riomaggiore, Manarola, Corniglia, Vernazza** and **Monterosso**. In spite of the intense tourism, exploring these villages represents a unique experience. Sport lovers will find much to do (among which Trail 586) for trek, kayak and mountain bike.

4) EXPLORING THE HANBURY BOTANIC GARDENS

There is no need to be a plant lover to appreciate the unique nature of the Hanbury Gardens, whose creation by Sir Thomas Hanbury began long ago in 1867. In the 18 hectares of the property, you can admire many **exotic plants** of rare beauty and the typical **Mediterranean flora**, all divided into eco-systems based on the provenance and beautifully presented. *La Topia* is one of the most spectacular places, with its collection of vines.

5) GUIDED TOUR AT THE TOIRANO CAVES

The Toirano Caves, with their winding narrow passages and karstic caverns presenting innumerable **stalactites and stalagmites** represent both a natural beauty and an historical treasure. They enshrine the **traces of the Homo Sapiens Sapiens dating back more than 12,000 years**, as well as footprints of prehistoric humans and cave bears' bones from over 30,000 years ago. Close to the caves, the Santuario Rupestre di Santa Lucia deserves a visit.

6) BIKE TOUR IN THE MIDST OF BREATHTAKING SCENERY

Liguria boasts many cycle paths and footpaths where you may enjoy physical activity while admiring the beauty and variety of the region. For a short bike tour around 4km, try the **cycle path from Varazze to Cogoleto**. For a bigger challenge, try the **Ponente cycle path**: built on the track of an old railway, it goes from San Lorenzo al Mare to Ospedaletti, passing among the enchanting landscapes of Sanremo, Taggia and Riva Ligure.

Bussana Vecchia

7) THE GHOST TOWN OF BUSSANA VECCHIA: A WORLD OF ITS OWN

This village has a story to share with its visitors. Founded in the late Middle Ages, Bussana Vecchia was abandoned in 1887 after an earthquake and repopulated only in the '50s by a small community of artists who, without water supply and electricity, opened **art galleries and boutiques along the cobblestone alleys**. Find unique artworks in a place where time seems to have stopped.

8) OUTINGS IN THE STUNNING AVETO REGIONAL PARK

The Aveto Regional Park includes the Aveto Valley, Graveglia Valley and Sturla Valley, and offers **stunning and widely different landscapes**: dense high mountain forests, pasture, olive groves and vineyards, ancient rural villages as well as caves and mines. It offers a panorama that goes from the Ligurian Apennines to the sea and many different trekking routes for beginners and experts.

9) THE POSTCARD-LIKE PANORAMA OF CERVO

Cervo is an **amazing Medieval village** on top of a hill, with the typical cobblestone alleys and coloured houses, embodying the charm and history of this region so intimately connected to the sea. Do not content yourself with looking at it from the sea; visit the **old town**, the **Church of San Giovanni Battista** and the **Clavesana Castle**. Stay for a delicious aperitif in the timeless atmosphere of the village and take a look at the interesting local boutiques.

10) OLD TOWN OF ALBENGA

In the old town of Albenga you walk through the history of this village. Originally Ligurian, it **became first a Roman *municipium* and then a Medieval commune**. The Medieval architecture creates a delicious mix with the Roman urban design. Wander and enjoy the squares and paved alleys and admire the **Roman-Gothic Cathedral of San Michele Arcangelo**, the **Paleochristian Baptistery** in Byzantine style, the Medieval Tower Houses and the **Church of San Giorgio**.

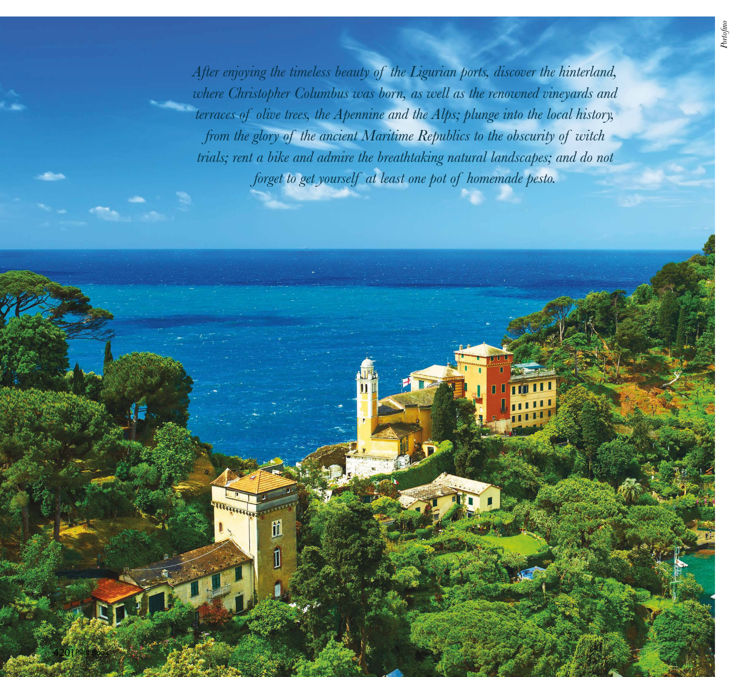
Cattedrale di Albenga, Savona

ONSHORE ITINERARIES - LIGURIA

A BITE AND A SIP IN LIGURIA

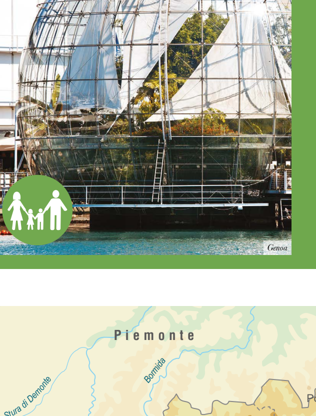
The first image that comes to your mind when thinking about Ligurian food is definitely the green colour of ***pesto***. This flavour-filled and simple sauce perfectly mirrors the Ligurian cuisine: based on locally-grown, cheap and wholesome ingredients such as wild herbs and the **best produce from farms, forests and gardens**. The staples are **olive oil, dried and fresh pasta and flour-based products**, as is found in typical Mediterranean cuisine. Do not leave Liguria without tasting the ***trofie al pesto*** (pasta), the **Ligurian-style rabbit** (with olives, pine nuts and rosemary) and the street food: **focaccia, farinata, frisceu e cuculli** (two kinds of fritter), **baked stuffed vegetables, *polpettoni* with vegetables**, and **pies**. For dessert you must try Pandolce Genovese, the Canestrelli cookies and the Panera, a delicious custard made with coffee, sugar and cream. Although the region is mainly mountainous, great wines are to be found, including the 8 DOCs: **Ormeasco di Pornassio, Rossese di Dolceacqua, Riviera Ligure di Ponente, Val Polcevera, Golfo del Tigullio-Portofino, Colline di Levanto, Cinque Terre** and **Colli di Luni**.

Trofie al pesto



After enjoying the timeless beauty of the Ligurian ports, discover the hinterland, where Christopher Columbus was born, as well as the renowned vineyards and terraces of olive trees, the Apennine and the Alps; plunge into the local history, from the glory of the ancient Maritime Republics to the obscurity of witch trials; rent a bike and admire the breathtaking natural landscapes; and do not forget to get yourself at least one pot of homemade pesto.

Portofino



Genoa

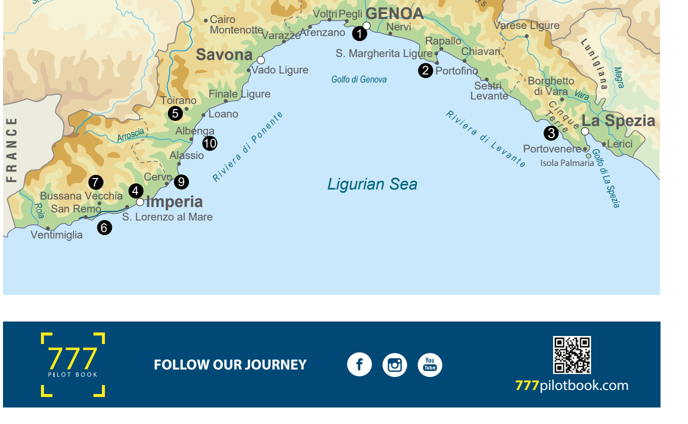
FAMILY FUN: ACTIVITIES FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

For a day of relaxation and full of family fun, here are our suggestions:

GENOA AQUARIUM: a must see in Genoa, where learning and fun are guaranteed.

ASTRONOMICAL OBSERVATORY OF GENOA: experience thrilling observation with the telescope, take part in the educational workshops and screenings in the planetarium.

ADVENTURE PARK VAL DI VARA: enjoy the zip line and other amusing activities offering varied levels of skill while immersed in the amazing landscape of Tavarone, in the province of La Spezia.



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ONSHORE ITINERARIES - LIGURIA