

CERVO – IMPERIA – BUSSANA VECCHIA (BY CAR)

This full-day excursion will take you to one of the most picturesque hamlets on the Ligurian coast, the homeland for the cultivation of flowers and olives, to finish with one of the former “ghost town” in the region.

You may decide to drive either on the main road “*Aurelia*”, or take the motorway from FINALE LIGURE. The first stop is about 45 kms from VEREZZI and the travel time much depends on the traffic. In case you take the motorway, exit at SAN BARTOLOMEO AL MARE.

CERVO is a small, ancient town built on top of a hill, along the Ligurian coast, which preserves its original features of a medieval seaside village, protected by 16th-century towers and walls, surrounded by green hills of olive trees. The historic centre is practicable only on foot and has been preserved with its centuries-old buildings and its cobbled alleys where there are workshops of artisans and artists.



Even on the table, CERVO has remained faithful to its traditions and its history: here it still makes the oil with the ancient technique of cold pressing, the wine is produced with the typical grapes (*Pigato* and *Vermentino*) and the dishes are cooked with the catch of the day.

Do not miss the concave facade, the symbol of the town, of the Church of San Giovanni Battista (XVII-XVIII century), which overlooks Corallini Square, the beating heart of the village. The village is very known for the International Festival of Chamber Music, that takes place every year in July and August, where the greatest artists of Europe offer concerts under the moonlight, by exploiting the acoustic potentials of the square.

After leaving CERVO, continue driving along the coast in the direction of VENTIMIGLIA, for about 10 km and you will reach **IMPERIA**.



There are two historical districts in the city, ***Oneglia*** and ***Porto Maurizio***, which lie on both sides of the *Impero* River, origin of the city’s name. *Porto Maurizio* is located on the west side on a peninsula and stretches along the coast. It is quite a wealthy and colourful district with many narrow winding lanes. *Oneglia* lies on the other side of the river and has a harbour. This district is more industrial and modern in nature.

In Imperia, you can visit the **Olive Oil Museum**, where you can learn about the olive, the olive tree cultivation, and the olive oil production. www.museodellolivo.com

Instead, you can take a walk along a pedestrian coastal path to BORGIO PRINO, a “must-go” fishermen hamlet of IMPERIA. If it’s lunch or dinner time, here we recommend the restaurant NERO DI SEPPIA www.nerodiseppia.net where you can eat with the flavour and the sound of the sea.

When leaving IMPERIA, continue driving in the direction of VENTIMIGLIA for 24 kms. Along the coast and, after passing ARMA DI TAGGIA follow the road signs for **BUSSANA VECCHIA**, which lies on a hill on your right. This village was almost destroyed by an earthquake in 1887 then renovated and repopulated by an international community of artists in the early 1960s.

The place has over the years gained the reputation of a rural artists’ residence within the setting of a medieval village, with craft shops, cafes, and small restaurants.

It is a delightful village of artists born on the ruins of a town that was abandoned long before. Today, it still remains a magical place, an open-air art laboratory. In the narrow streets and alleys, you can admire shops and ateliers that arise in the beautiful stone buildings



A particular aspect is that there are no streets, cars are not allowed, everything keeps its ancient nature. It has got its own Constitution: ruins belong to no one, anyone can choose one, take it and be restored using only the materials still present on the territory. A sort of pacific occupation, a new society made of artists, small shops, ateliers, bio and vegan bar, restaurants, and coffee shops, a couple of bed and breakfasts. Mailboxes of the inhabitants are in the entrance of the town; it conveys the idea of a big family.



The best way to enjoy BUSSANA VECCHIA is getting lost in its alleys. Every part of it hides a beautiful arch, a decoration, a statue, a painting. It is worth a relaxing walk, admiring look-like fairy tiny houses, recycled material decorations, flowers, plants, and more. Do not miss the old *Saint Egidio* Church, never rebuilt, that still shows stuccoes and original wall paintings. You will feel to be in a parallel universe, without smog, consumerism, and internet addiction.

At the end of your visit, take the motorway back from “IMPERIA OVEST” and exit at “FINALE LIGURE”; the journey is approximately 75 kms and driving time much depends on the traffic!