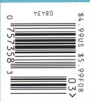


MARCH 2014
TRUTH IN TRAVEL

Condé Nast Traveler

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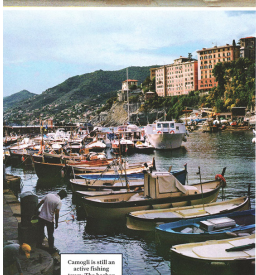
WHERE WHAT HOW

Stepped
passageways and
narrow roads
lead to the harbor
in the seaside
town of Camogli.

QUICK TRIP

HIDDEN RIVIERA

Tucked into a thyme-scented hillside, the slow-paced fishing village of Camogli is easy to find and hard to forget. It's only a two-hour drive from Milan—and yet one of Italy's best-kept secrets.



Camogli is still an active fishing town. The harbor is packed with small boats and the docks strewn with nets drying in the sun.



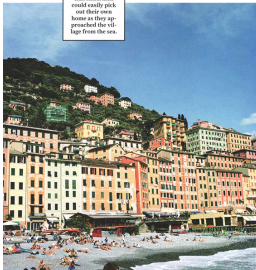
THE PICTURESQUE, just-sleepy-enough village of Camogli is intricately tied to the sea. Lore has it that Camogli, shortened from *casa delle mogli* ("house of wives"), got its name from the women who watched over the town while their fishermen husbands were away. It sits an hour's drive up the Ligurian coast from the Cinque Terre, and like the five towns there, it's linked to neighboring villages by a footpath backed by vertiginous hills and cliffs giving way to the brilliant-blue sea below. Here too are the multi-story palazzi, painted in the muted pinks, yellows, and terra-cottas you find along this coast, their deep-green shutters framed by trompe l'oeil flourishes.

Unlike the Cinque Terre or nearby Portofino, however, Camogli is a secret that Italians have kept to themselves. It's the summer retreat of discreetly well-heeled Milanese and Turinese, whose families have returned for generations to get their annual dose of sunshine and pesto . . . and, you'll find, the ideal escape from the madding crowds.

Perhaps no one appreciates Camogli's under-the-radar calm more than Mario Pietracetta and Fulvio Zendrini. In 2007, the couple quit their corporate jobs in Milan to open *Villa Rosmarino*, a six-suite 1907 palazzo that they've impeccably restored with a clean, modern sensibility.

While it's easy to spend all day at Villa Rosmarino, poolside or browsing the hotel's library, the owners are happy to show you Bagni Silla, a hidden gem of a beach club in the adjacent town of Sori, where you dive off the rocks right into the ocean. Or they can take you out in their *gozzo*, the classic wooden motorboat, around the Promontorio di Portofino—a headland that extends into the deep-blue waters of the aptly named Golfo Paradiso.

Houses in Camogli were traditionally painted different colors so that fishermen could easily pick out their own home as they approached the village from the sea.



But the best way to get to know the area is on foot. Heading south from Camogli, take the stone path that briefly follows a shaded creek and then climbs a series of stairs, leading you past olive and citrus trees, cactus, and stands of palm, under boughs of myrtle and laurel, and through air scented with wild rosemary and lavender. Unlike on the heavily trafficked route through the Cinque Terre, you'll be virtually alone.

Just when you think you can't possibly make it any farther (it's a half-hour trip, nearly all uphill), you arrive in San Rocco. Here you can take in the spectacular view of the surrounding countryside or stop for a meal at **La Cucina di Nonna Nina**, where Paolo Delpian prepares traditional Ligurian dishes, including an antipasto plate of marinated anchovies and sardines and octopus salad.

It's worth continuing on the trail all the way to the abbey at San Fruttuoso (an additional two and a half hours), where there's a ferry back to Camogli. If you return instead from San Rocco, keep an eye out for a hand-lettered sign just outside town advertising *marmellate*. Here, an elderly couple sells homemade lemon marmalade and a glorious apricot jam.

Back in Camogli, join the headcheers who head to *focaccias* like **O' Becco Fin** or **Revello** for *focaccia col formaggio*, a specialty from nearby Recco in which rich, gooey cheese is encased in millimeter-thin sheets of dough. And before heading to dinner—perhaps at **Da Paolo** or **Di Spadin**, for freshly caught seafood—join the locals emerging for their *passaggiata* to watch the sun go down, the sky draining all the color from the buildings and turning the sea to silver. —Winnie Yang Photos by Brian W. Ferry

STAY

Villa Rosmarino

Via Imela
Fispari 38; 39-
0185-771380;
villarosmarino
.com; doubles
from \$220.

La Cucina

di Nonna Nina
Via Melino 126;
39-0185-775835;
nonnina.it;
antipasto from \$19.

EAT

Da Paolo

Via San Francesco
34; 39-0185-
773995;
restaurant@da-paolo
camogli.com;
antipasto from \$11.

O' Becco Fin

Via Giuseppe
Caribaldi 169;
39-0105-957011.

Revello

Via Caribaldi
183; 39-0185-
770777; revello
camogli.com.

Di Spadin

Via San Rocco 55;
39-0185-770624;
antipasto from \$11.