

Italy
LEVANTO



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Geographical Location and Population

Levanto is a comune (municipality) in the Province of La Spezia in the Italian region Liguria, located about 60 km southeast of Genoa and about 20 km northwest of La Spezia. The town is on the coast at the end of a valley, thickly wooded with olive and pine trees. The municipality is part of the coastal district known as the Comunità Montana della Riviera Spezzina. Part of Levanto lies within the Cinque Terre National Park. The town itself is a famous surfing resort. As of 31 December 2004, it had a population of 5,665 and an area of 38.0 km².



History

In Roman times there was already a small settlement by the name of Ceula on the hills. At the beginning of the 9th century, the bell tower of the present church, the Chiesa di San Siro, served as a watchtower and as a defence against dangers from the sea.

In the middle Ages, the village became a centre of commercial activity, benefiting from maritime and overland communications. In the post medieval period, the village saw major development with the construction of the Borgo nuovo or Stagno on the plain of the Ghiararo. This survives today and is characterized by interesting 17th and 18th century buildings.

A further phase of urban development took place at the turn of the 19th and

20th centuries with the opening of two thoroughfares, the present Corso Italia and Corso Roma.

From 1950, the village experienced further growth culminating during the 1970s in the present townscape.



Intangible Cultural Heritage

1. Festa di San Giacomo (Feast of St James) and Festa del Mare (Festival of the Sea). 24 - 25 July.

The Sea Festival is divided into a four-day celebration – from 22 to 25 July - with the highlight on July 24, the day traditionally devoted to the historical re-enactments, medieval games, the tug of war and the ability of flag-wavers and on July 25, the day with the solemn celebration of St. James the Apostle, by the religious brotherhoods, the grand procession through the streets reaching the beach, the Great fireworks on the sea, 10.000 lights adorning the floating body of water and the fair all day long in a town full of tourists and believers.

2. Festa di Nostra Signora della Guardia Traditional band concert. 29 August.

3. Sagra Del Gattafin (fried pastry stuffed with beets, onions, egg and grated cheese) in June.

4. Festa Madonna Del Soccorso 1-2 July in Fontona (a little village near Levanto)

