



Tourist Itinerary 5

Acqui Terme – Strevi – Ricaldone – Maranzana – Mombaruzzo – Quaranti – Castelletto Molina – Fontanile – Castel Rocchero – Alice Bel Colle – Acqui (approximative distance 50 km circa)

The route takes you across a **picturesque landscape of UNESCO-listed vineyards** stretching as far as the eye can see, an area renowned for its wine producers and famous wine cellars.



From the tourist information office in Acqui, turn right in Corso Roma, at the roundabout continue straight ahead, for about 300 metres and follow for Alessandria, on the provincial road SP30. After around 3km, you will arrive in **STREVI**, in the heart of the **Moscato lands**, made up of two hamlets: one on the plains and the other on a hilly ridge. In the upper part, the village still retains its original walls, two towers and a medieval bridge, where you may admire is the **Castle** dating back to the 14th century, now the Town Hall, and the Baroque parish church with Romanesque bell tower. In the lower hamlet there is a 16th-century villa

and the residence of the Bishop of Acqui dating back to 1700. To mention the production of torrone and amaretti biscuits.

In the Bagnario valley you may find the **yellow-coloured Big Bench**.

From here we continue to **RICALDONE**, first mentioned in a document from 1137, where it was described as being surrounded by uncultivated land, meadows, woods and vineyards.

Before entering the village, on the right, we recommend a stop at the **UNESCO “Belvedere” observation point**.

You may visit the **Church of SS. Simone e Giuda** dating back to the first half of the 16th century with valuable paintings and frescoes, and the chapels of Madonna del Rosario and S. Giuseppe.

The local activities are related to wine production with several producers and the cooperative wine cellar, While 1995 the **Luigi Tenco Cultural Association** was founded and since 2006 the **Tenco Museum**, which can be visited by appointment (the singer-songwriter's body is buried in the village cemetery). Not to be missed in July "**L'Isola in collina**", one of the main Italian events dedicated to Luigi Tenco and other greats historic songwriters.



Ricaldone is also famous for its **“Tre Secoli”** wine cellar, located on the hillside, and from its panoramic terraces you can admire the beautiful view of the vineyard landscape.

On the road to Maranzana, you will find the **burgundy red and white Big Bench**.

Continuing along this road, you will arrive in **MARANZANA**, located on the hilltop, surrounded by beautiful vineyards.

The entire area lies within the protected natural area called "**IL BOSCO DELLE SORTI- LA COMMUNA**", an area of outstanding beauty and faunistic importance.

Maranzana is an ideal place to relax immersed in nature, surrounded by forests and neat rows of vineyards.

The village's hilltop location provides breathtaking views from every point, with unforgettable sunrises and sunsets and panoramas stretching over the Po Valley, the Apennines and the Alps.

Attractions to visit include the **Parish Church**, dating back to 1600 and renovated in 1879, dedicated to the patron saints St Giovanni Battista and St Emernziana.

Also, in the main piazza stands the **Medieval Castle** from 1100, enlarged and restored over the centuries, visible from the outside. The Castle is a remarkable example of a fortified building, with a majestic wall, a square tower and a circular tower.

The Civic Tower, dating back to the 13th century and restored in 1986, welcomes visitors in Piazza G. Marconi and offers an incomparable view over the hills, the plains, as far as the Alps and the Apennines.

The centre is also home to the **Palazzo Comunale (Town Hall)**, which houses the “Giacomo Bove & Maranzana” cultural association and some artefacts of the explorer Giacomo Bove, who was born there.



Maranzana is also known as the **“Villaggio dei Babaci”**. The story narrates that the village, once inhabited by about a thousand people, has gradually emptied to fewer than 300 inhabitants.

In order to repopulate the village and revive its reputation, the residents created puppets called “babaci” using fabric and recycled materials, that began to populate the village, creating an original initiative.

The “La Maranzana” winery was founded in the late 1950s by a group of winegrowers.

From here head north-east on the SP4.44 towards **MOMBARUZZO**, famous for its long wine-making tradition and for being home to the renowned “Cantina Sociale di Mombaruzzo” part of the “Tre Secoli” winery and Distilleria Berta.

Historically speaking, Mombaruzzo has ancient origins and is presumed to have been founded during Roman times. Over the centuries, it has been involved in various historical events and dominated by various noble families, including the Marchesi Incisa and the Conti Scarampi. This rich history is reflected in the town's architecture and points of interest.

One of the main attractions is its well-preserved historical centre. Here, you can stroll along the cobbled streets and admire the old stone houses and historic palaces. **The Church of San Martino**, with its elegant Baroque facade, is an important landmark.



The **Cantina Sociale di Mombaruzzo**, part of Tre Secoli, is one of the largest and most renowned cooperative wineries in the region.

Another unique attraction is the **Distilleria Berta**, a family business that has been producing grappa, spirits and fine liqueurs since 1947.

In addition to these attractions, Mombaruzzo is enclosed in a charming hilly landscape surrounded by vineyards and hazelnut groves. You can explore the countryside along scenic trails and enjoy beautiful views of the Monferrato region.

From the Berta distillery, take the SP4 to **QUARANTI** a small hamlet with an ancient history that offers visitors a combination of natural beauty and cultural heritage.



Historically speaking, Quaranti has very ancient origins. It is believed that the name of the hamlet derives from the Latin “Quadrantes”, meaning “four parts”. This refers to the ancient division of the territory into four parts during the Roman period. Over the centuries, Quaranti was influenced by several noble families, including the Marchesi of Monferrato and the Conti of Quaranti.

Another attraction is the **parish church of San Giorgio** of Romanesque origin, it was built in the 13th century and presents an interesting combination of architectural styles. The interior is decorated with frescoes and valuable works of art.

art.

The area is characterised by rolling hills and vineyards, typical of the Monferrato landscape. It is possible to do excursions on foot or by bike along the scenic paths that reward to beautiful views of the surrounding countryside.

From Quaranti, continue in the direction of **CASTELLETTO MOLINA**, take the SP4 and then the SP45,

The toponym of Castelletto Molina is said to derive, for the first part, from the Latin “castelletum”, meaning small castle, while “Molina” could be a reference to the most common surname in the village.

The origins of the village date back to Roman times, as confirmed by the discovery of archaeological finds.

The main square is overlooked by the main places of interest.

The **Castle dei Conti Veggi**, inhabited by several co-owning families, the parish **Church of San Bartolomeo Apostolo**, in front of which stands the elegant town hall. Also worth seeing are the **Oratory of the Annunziata** (or Castle Church) and the **Madonna della Neve Sanctuary**.



An interesting mural painting dedicated to Don Amilcare Ruella can be seen in Via Roma.

The premises of the local Bottega del Vino also house a small museum dedicated to agricultural arts. Castelletto Molina is still one of the few villages in the Asti area that keeps alive the practice of “balon”, today “palla a pugno” (a traditional game literally means fist-ball).

From Castelletto we continue along the SP45a towards **FONTANILE**.



The village is known for its **murals**, paintings depicting everyday scenes and characters from the past. These murals, created by Luigi Amerio, a local painter, are part of the municipal initiative “I Muri Raccontano” (the walls narrate) and transform the walls of the houses into real works of art representing the history and life of the village. The paintings include symbolic images, events, historical places and real people, creating a time travel through the streets of Fontanile.

In addition to the murals, Fontanile also has other points of interest. The historic centre shows the hallmarks of an ancient medieval town, with access gates, an old public washhouse and the Ansaldo Tower, one of the four towers that once protected the village walls.

The **Church of St Giovanni Battista**, with its imposing dome, dominates the village and the entire landscape and offers panoramic views.

Other churches worth visiting include the **Church of San Sebastiano** and that of **San Rocco**.

The name Fontanile reveals the village's historical connection with water. The name itself means “land rich in water” and recalls the numerous fountains and spring waters that once characterised the area. This link with the element of water is also evident through the testimonies present in the village, such as the **drawbridge** in Via Marconi, the **public washhouse** dating back to 1600 and the **Pozzo della Rocca**.

Not to be missed is the **Aqua Green Big Bench**, located on the Macario property and commissioned by the Michele Chiarlo company, that offers a magnificent view of the surrounding countryside and enjoys the shade of a large oak tree. After visiting Fontanile, take the SP45 and then the SP456 towards **CASTEL ROCCHERO**.

Castel Rocchero, meaning the castle on the rock, has controlled and defended its territory and its most precious produce since its days as a Roman Castrum: vineyards and harvests.

Walking around the village you can catch a glimpse of the vineyards and geometrically arranged rows of vines, that are a spectacle so evocative that it almost seems magical, they follow the gentle relief of the hills and during the autumn create a magnificent game of colours.

The main tourist activity is therefore, in addition to the wine, the landscape,

which deserves at least a bicycle ride or walk through the rows of vines. The gaze enfolds over the entire Monferrato Astigiano and in particular over the ridge of hills that surround Nizza which include the most renowned Barbera "crus". In the background, all the Alps, from the Maritime to the Lombardy, enclose this spectacular amphitheatre. The village owes its name to the presence of a fortress, erected in the 12th century by the Marchesi of Monferrato, but then remodelled several times under the Scarampi, until its destruction by the citizens of Acqui in 1496.

In its place, a small building was built, now the town hall, in which the Blesi family settled.

The parish church stands out, visible from afar due to the slender silhouette of the bell tower, the symbol of the village. The interior of the church is a singular example of a harmonious and composed Piedmontese Baroque style.

The village's **main square** has kept its traditional character intact and is an example of a cosy, simple Piedmontese country town planning.

This is the land of Barbera and Moscato, Brachetto and Dolcetto, with dozens of producers, many of whom supply grapes to the large Cantina Sociale, "La Torre" with an imposing tower, situated on the SP456 in the direction of Acqui, founded in late spring 1953. Completed in 1956 by the winemaker Emilio Sernagiotto, is one of the last three wine towers still standing in Italy.

The route continues towards **ALICE BEL COLLE**, by following on the left "Regione Rossa" for around 1km and at Località Fraschetta, on your left you can enjoy a break at the **pink-coloured Big Bench and the Baroque church of Santa Maria della Fraschetta.**, return back on the road and at the junction turn right to Alice Bel Colle.



The origins of Alice go back to the beginning of the Christian era.

It is divided into two hamlets, the older one located on the hill, while the newer one extends further down the valley and it is called Alice Stazione.

On the main square of the high part, which gives its name to the village, reached through cobbled roads, there are the parish church of **San Giovanni Battista**, the neo-classical **town hall** and the **remains of an ancient castle**, where today there is a **panoramic tower** offering a breathtaking 360° view of all the surrounding valleys.

Vines are a monoculture here; in fact, in the lower part of the village there is the cooperative wine cellar and other artisan activities.

Once the visit of Alice is over, go down to Alice Stazione to return back to Acqui Terme.

