



Tour: "3 Medieval Villages"

Balestrino → Castelvechio di Rocca Barbena → Zuccarello (distance trail: 40 km)

1) BALESTRINO, *the abandoned village ...*

Above the old village you can see the imposing **Castle of the noble family Del Carretto**, medieval landowners. It was built at the beginning of the 16th century where there was already an old-medieval fortification.

It seems like time has stopped at 50 years ago: old walls and wild countryside, stone buildings and old cellars in a melancholic atmosphere.

In 1963 the old village was abandoned by the inhabitants because of several landslides. They decided to rebuild a new town towards the mountain and the "old" Balestrino became a ghost-village, that shows all its charming mystery. Balestrino has recently been the setting for the movie "Inkheart" by Iain Softley.

Pay attention to the road signs: it is better not to enter the old buildings because of collapse danger.



2) CASTELVECCHIO DI ROCCA BARBENA, *clinging to the mountain to reach the sky...*

Castelvechio di Rocca Barbena is a wonderful Ligurian village of the 11th century. It was a medieval stronghold, surrounded by imposing walls. Crossing the village we can notice small evocative corners, like the old washtubs and the typical ovens with their particular hump shape that you can even see

from the external walls of the old houses. The houses are characterized by dome-shaped roofs or terraced roofs and by little walls to collect rainy water. The castle is high on the rocky mountain Barbena (1142 m.), towering above the whole valley, offering a wonderful view.

3) ZUCCARELLO, *main town of the marquis' s property...*

Zuccarello is another medieval stronghold with its old arcade of the 11th century, one of the most beautiful of the region. Zuccarello stretches along an only street between two arcades on both sides, where once there were small handicraft workplaces and shops.

Parallel to this main street you can find the typical narrow Ligurian streets, called "carruggi" and the stronghold-houses in the external part of the town. Close to the town gates there are two typical medieval towers. An image of the Romanesque bridge in Zuccarello has also been the cover of the famous magazine "Time" during the 60s.

