Karma + Travel

Serena
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What does it mean to travel?

To buy tickets, see places, take pictures, come back with unlikely souvenirs, and look for the next tickets. Those who say "I'm not a tourist, **I'm a traveler**." The important thing is the journey, not the destination. Blablabla.

I have always given a prominent position to travel in my choices: how to spend the **money** I earn, how to use my **time**.

So I have been a tourist for months on end, without worrying about the consequences that prolonged absence could have on my career and personal life.

July 2023 | Calice (SV) | As often happens, I got lost.

I said yes to all the experiences that came my way, tasted anything that was put on my plate, got lost and got sick; I saw wild animals, slept in stations, forests, shacks, tents, and on ship bridges.

July 2023 | Calice (SV) | Moments of creative overflowing

And after all these years of **experiential tourism**, I believe I have understood what traveling really means: it's not a matter of how many kilometers away from home you are, or how exotic your destinations are.

It's a matter of **mindset**, as they say now.

July 2023 | Calice (SV) | The house where I lived for two months

If you are able to disconnect from your daily routine, if your gaze can rediscover the wonder of children, if you know how to silence all your biases and welcome the new and the different... in short, **if you are willing to learn: this is traveling**.

July 2023 | Calice (SV) | Mental journeys, one of my favorite summer pastimes

When one talks about karma

Usually when my friends ask me "What are you doing this summer?" they expect answers like

- Oh, I'm taking my daughter, going to Vietnam/Canada/Scotland/to the Moon and we'll travel randomly for a month.

But this year instead:

- I rented **a house in Liguria**.

You might think it's the epitome of a middle-class comfort zone. However, it turned **out to be one of the most punk-rock trips of my life**.

July 2023 | Calice (SV) | Festival at the La Casermetta refuge

I have to say that I have been very lucky

I was looking for a place:

1. ot far from Milan

2. Equipped with a fast internet connection so I could work efficiently

3. Near the sea, but far enough from the Italian holiday frenzy

Based on these three criteria, I selected a location that I had never heard of before.

August 2023 | Calice (SV) | Clair de lune

It is located in the Ponente area, **between Savona and Sanremo**. Here there are no five lands and vertical cliffs, but a larger and welcoming territory, which towards **Finale Ligure** becomes less cultivated and wilder, with intense green forests and windy mountains where clouds gather.

August 2023 | Calice (SV) | The forests on the Colle del Melogno

Arriving on the highway, the first thing that catches the eye is the **Rocca di Perti**, a huge solitary cliff that stands out in the middle of the forests like a giant of stone. At its feet, **one of the most beautiful medieval villages in Italy, Finalborgo**.

August 2023 | Finalborgo (SV) | A film set already prepared

Now turn towards the mountains and you will see, embraced by the woods, a charming little village with a name that already evokes sympathy: **Calice**.

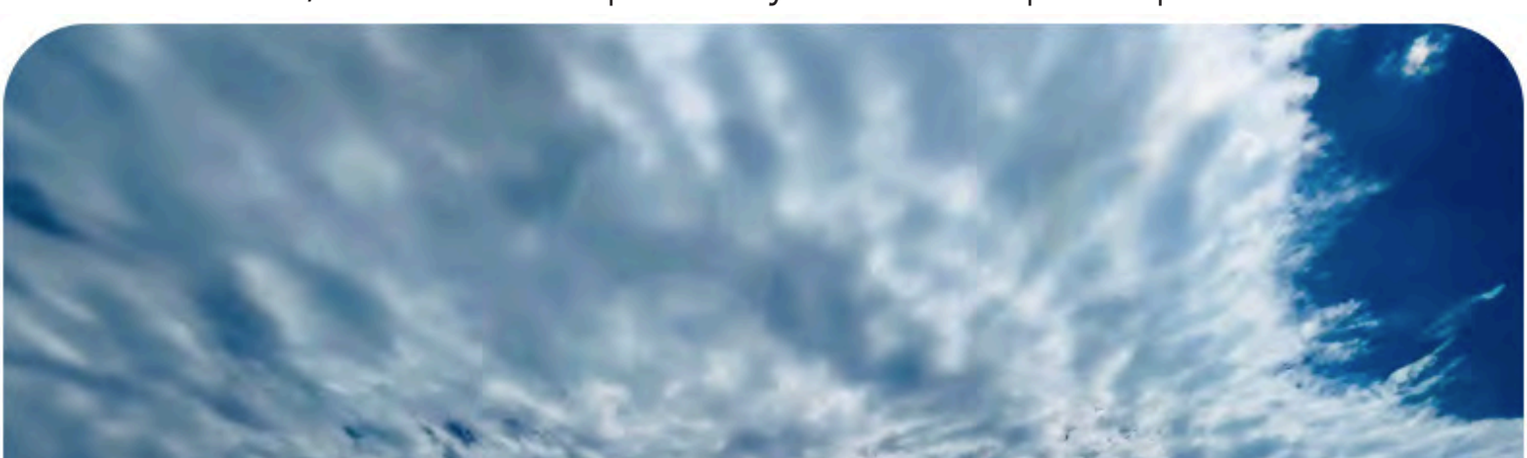
A place like thousands in Italy, main street, church, sports field, post office, a couple of bars, pizzeria and tobacco shop. Cute houses with terraced gardens, a well-maintained small pedestrian historic center.

August 2023 | Calice (Savona) | You can already tell from the sign that it is a place of worship for outdoor activities

In two months, I fell in love with this place

It's not the first time it happens to me, I have a temperament inclined towards fiery passions.

In the past, I had already fallen in love with: *San Cristóbal de Las Casas* (Mexico), *Jericoacoara* (Brazil), *Ucluelet* (Canada), *Salta* (Argentina), *Haad Rin* (Thailand), and many others. But this time it's different, don't laugh. Calice and I are **soulmates**, and now I'll explain why in three simple steps.



August 2023 | Finale Ligure (Savona) | Storm surge on the west coast

Number one: the territory

This small country is the heart of a piece of world blessed by the gods.

Let's start with the **sea**, which in these parts is a **blue flag**. No floating plastic or oily film on the surface. Blue, transparent, fresh water. If you put on a mask, just a few meters from the shore, you can see castagnole, triglie, sogliole, and even some small groupers. It's not the coral reef, it's the **good old Mediterranean** in all its dignified splendor.

August 2023 | Rialto (Savona) | The waterfall of the blue dragonflies

On the mainland, you can choose between **forests, waterfalls, trails, cliffs, caves, rivers, and mountains**. Everything is close, everything is reachable.

One of my sunset rituals:

🚵 Going out on a **bike** around 5 pm

💪 Cycling uphill for about forty minutes, sweating my soul out

🦋 Reaching a small **waterfall**, with a clear water pool where I can take a freezing bath (this magical place is inhabited by green-blue dragonflies, I swear it feels like being in Avatar)

🌅 And in the glory of the golden hour, returning downhill, leaning on the curves

Aaaahhhhh…

August 2023 | Calice (SV) | I the Universe that we talk to

I walked in the forests, encountered deer and spotted birds of prey, cycled on the trails, and explored caves. In short, Calice is located in the center of the Valley of Eden. But if that wasn't enough...

Number two: the local economy

This small town is the heart of a piece of world blessed by the gods.

If you want to be travelers, and not clueless tourists, before considering a place, inform yourself about the basic issue: **how do the inhabitants make a living**?
If the answer is "opium cultivation" or simply "mass tourism", or any other scenario, **human presence** will be a direct consequence.

Here the economy is based on tourism, but not exclusively mass tourism.

August 2023 | Finale Ligure (SV) | San Donato Beach

The coastal part of Finale is a classic destination for Italian holidays: beautiful and organized beaches, family entertainment, seafood restaurants.

If you move slightly inland, you enter the realm of the **Finale Outdoor Region**, a project managed by a local consortium/association for sports.

A protected territory is the fundamental prerequisite for becoming a leader in high-quality outdoor tourism.

It is written on their website, and I assure you, these are not just empty words.

July 2023 | Finale Ligure (SV) | Finale Outdoor Region, an amusement park for outdoor enthusiasts

The work of FOR consists in offering tourists a **network of trails**: well-maintained, mapped, signposted, and served by shuttles; the same goes for **climbing routes** and **climbing walls**, hiking trails and all the wonders in the surroundings. A useful and beautiful website, a network of **qualified guides** to take you on any type of experience, a **physical hub** with a training wall and a bike workshop.

All of this is communicated excellently and managed professionally and friendly.
The result?

Instead of tourists loaded with inflatables and coolers, who happened to book randomly on booking, you will see groups of muddy **riders**, adorable families of **cyclists** or **backpackers**, and all the range of globetrotters and outdoor enthusiasts you can imagine.

August 2023 | Finale Ligure (SV) | MTB trails everywhere

Instead of souvenir shops in the historic center, there is a string of single-**brand shops** to die for (Salewa, Patagonia, North Face, etc.), alternating with places that offer all sorts of heavenly culinary delights, from focaccia to double chocolate vegan cake.

If Zonzers Town existed, it would be exactly like this.

And to finish...

August 2023 | Calice (SV) | Il Bar Viola, where everything happens

Number three: the people

No place can be defined without its **inhabitants**. In Calice there are:

👉 those who have always lived there
👉 hose who came from outside and never left
👉 those who were born there, traveled around for half of their lives, and then returned

July 2023 | Calice (SV) | Rock live on the street

Everyone knows each other, everyone greets each other, you can leave your front door wide open, or your bike on the street while you have coffee. Then surely they will have their quarrels like everyone else, but for those who, like me, come from cities where going out of the house feels like going to war, this relaxed atmosphere is a balm for the soul.

And sooner or later, everyone passes by **Bar Viola**.

July 2023 | Calice (SV) | Bar Working

A country bar, but one with a rich **history and personality** to spare. No slot machines or scratch cards, and no menu. Warm brioches in the morning, sandwiches created on the spot, expertly crafted drinks of all kinds.

But above all, live music **is played in this bar**.

August 2023 | Finale Ligure (SV) | New tattoo on the back

Local musicians and bands performing directly on the street. Various genres, mainly rock, in all its variations and performed live with relaxed skill.

Throughout the evening, **people pass by, greet, and stop**. Tourist riders with sunburned noses and the elderly of the town; those coming out of the **trattoria** next door (where, needless to say, the food is amazing) and the friends of the musicians in leather jackets or Sex Pistols t-shirts; those who have just finished work or have seen the posters around.

Meanwhile, on the sea, vacationers gather to watch fireworks or a magic show.

Some nights here feel like being on Route 66, start the movie.

Wonder is hidden everywhere, the world is still an unexplored place, everything is illuminated, etc.

I humbly thank the Universe for giving me this lesson, through two months of life in **a corner of Italy**.

Ringrazio umilmente l'Universo per avermi dato questa lezione, attraverso due mesi di vita in un angolo di Italia.

Don't worry if you have the **desire to see the whole world** but your budget or commitments don't allow it.

Adventures are everywhere there are adventurous spirits willing to live them.

👉 **finaleoutdoor.com/en**

🎸 **Bar Viola** Piazza Massa - Calice (SV)

🚲 **Riviera Outdoor** Piazza Garibaldi - Finalborgo

⛺ **AgriBike Camping** Rialto (SV)

⚓ **Pablo Moretz Tattoo** Finalborgo

🥨 **Siamo Fritti** Via Castelli - Finale (SV)

🍦 **Gelateria Pastorino** Via Vittorio Veneto - Calice (SV)

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