



Even on a race weekend, sometimes a girl just needs to slip away. While the engines were doing their thing somewhere else, I quietly hit pause – on the circuits, the office, the endless notifications. Just for a moment. What I craved was sunlight, stillness and a little sparkle. So I followed

it – to Portofino. Honestly? Not the worst idea I've ever had.

We left Zurich early, chasing that soft, golden kind of summer feeling (though to be fair, Zurich's been spoiling us this season already). On the way down, we made a mandatory stop in Lake Como – because really, how could we not? Coffee at Grand Hotel Tremezzo was everything you dream it would be: timeless, slow, and soaked in color and light. The kind of moment where your shoulders drop, your espresso tastes sweeter, and the lake sparkles like it's sprinkled with tiny Swarovski crystals.

From there, we cruised down the Ligurian coast, winding through roads that practically cling to cliffs, with peeks of turquoise water teasing you around every corner (and yes – there are a lot of corners). By the time we reached Portofino, something had already shifted. The energy slowed. The harbor buzzed in that effortless Italian way – yachts bobbing lazily, spritz glasses clinking, seafood pastas being shared and the scent of salt in the air. Everything felt like a deep exhale.

We checked into a cozy little Airbnb just outside the village – nothing over the top, but it came with private beach access, crystal-clear water, and the kind of view that makes you feel like you've somehow hacked life. It reminded me so much of Croatia – the cicadas, the clear sea, that comforting Mediterranean rhythm. Bit of a nostalgic moment... Croatia really does have a permanent place in my heart.

That first day was all about dolce far niente, beautifully. Just sun, seafood, and letting the day unfold without a plan.

Dinner that evening? Splendido Hotel, obviously. If you know, you know. And if you don't – put it on your list. I wore a dress I love, sipped a Splendido Spritz on the terrace while the sun dipped behind the hills, and had fresh fish under lemon trees, with candles flickering and piano music floating through the air. It felt like a film set. Think: 1950s elegance meets Italian Riviera charm. It gave me serious Notebook-but-make-it-Italian vibes. One of those evenings you mentally bookmark forever. And yes – it's in my 5-min journal.

The next day was slow in the best way. We wandered the little streets, had lunch in the main square and lingered over coffee and the dreamiest *giacconda* (so dreamy we bought an entire one to bring home). Portofino doesn't ask anything of you – ok, except maybe your wallet – but it invites you to stay a little longer, breathe a little deeper. The only urgency is the heat nudging you into the sea.

And sure, this was a mini escape – but *Fi* doesn't sleep. Even during your holidays. Even in paradise. A few emails, calls, and to-dos made their way in. But somehow, they felt lighter. Easier. When you're working with a beach view, an iPad, and a slice of juicy and cold watermelon next to you... that's not really work. That's just life in soft focus.

And speaking of soft focus – on our last morning, we stumbled upon the cutest little bar nearby. Total hidden gem, run by the sweetest couple, serving up everything Italian mornings should be made of: pistachio croissants, warm focaccia, ham paninis, fresh lemon juice, cappuccinos. We only found it on the last day (classic), but I already know I'd go back again and again if I could. Actually, I went back twice that day, packed a little lunch for the beach... a light dinner, too. When you find a spot that good, you don't just visit – you stock up.

And now – this very moment. I'm writing this with my toes in the sand, the waves in the background, and a soft breeze that still smells like sea salt. It's my last evening here. Tomorrow, I head back north with one more quiet

night in Zurich before the Monday madness kicks in again. But that's why I wanted to write this now – while my skin is still warm from the sun and everything still feels a little golden.

There's something magical about this in-between space. Where I get to be both – the woman who works hard and the girl who romanticizes her life. With salty hair, sun-kissed skin, and a heart full of stories. Because really – who says we can't be both?

🌟 Portofino reminded me it's okay to pause. To make room for beauty, for quiet, for joy. You're allowed to be soft and strong, dreamy and driven. Don't let anyone tell you otherwise.

Until next time, little coastal gem – you were pure magic.

