

With the Venice excursion ticked off, we had two days to relax at the camp. We chose this camp for its proximity to Venice, but also for its fantastic facilities. We were keen for the kids to experience a typical European beach resort. The day we arrived from Lerici was a bit of a culture shock. The kids were super excited, but to be honest we were just wishing we were back in Lerici! There can be up to 20,000 people staying at this camp, so it is on the scale of a small town. It is run with military precision and there are numerous rules to keep things under control. Every camper wears a wrist band, which must be removed on departure.

The camp was relatively quiet on Friday, but things changed dramatically on Saturday morning. By 8am there was a huge line of German cars at the check in. We have since discovered that German school holidays began that day! We don't know whether they had stayed somewhere en route or driven all night, but they had to wait several hours before they could get into their mobile homes. There are very few cars on the camp roads, just a sea of people, bicycles, scooters and rip-sticks (these must have been No. 1 on the Santa list in Germany last Christmas). The funny thing is that we have quickly adjusted to camp life and are now thoroughly enjoying it! It is a very different experience but fun all the same.

At the centre of the camp is the shopping and restaurant complex. Between the "Centro" and the beach is the Aquamarina Park. In NZ we think it's a big treat to have a camping ground with a pool. This one has its own water park, complete with Olympic sized pool, water slides, water playground and wave pool. It is spotlessly clean and rules are strictly enforced. The kids have spent many hours at the water park, with highlights being the wave pool, water slides and enormous dumping bucket on the playground. The weather has been perfect with little wind and temperatures peaking at around 28 degrees (hottest time of the day is around 4-5pm).







Like everything else in Italy, the water park needs its siesta. It closes from 1 - 3 pm. Fortunately the beach doesn't go on siesta so that was our beach time. We are down one end of a 14km long stretch of white sand. It is a world away from the beach we had to ourselves in Lerici. We share the beach with thousands of other campers as well as clothing stalls, gelato carts and numerous beach pedlars (mostly African). Goods on offer are mostly relevant - beach towels, sun glasses etc., but of course there are also hand bags and jewellery. The odd one is very persistent, but mostly they just wander off when you shake

your head. We had lots of fun experimenting with the best way to get rid of them. Interestingly they mostly targeted Andy, and when he was away I rarely got bothered. Matt worked out that the magic word "Ciao" got the message through to even the most persistent ones.











The gelato carts and clothing stalls arrive on tractors and are regularly moved along the beach. They have little motors that help them along. The camping ground has a separate section for people with dogs and the dog campers also get their own section of the beach. It was fun to go down there and check out the amazing variety of breeds. Dogs are so much part of the family here in Europe and welcomed in most places.







The camp really came to life in the evening, with everything open until 11pm. We had fun with mini golf and bumper boats and enjoyed a couple of BBQ dinners. The leftover embers were great for marshmallow toasting! It was a very relaxing couple of days and lovely to enjoy some warm summer weather. It might be a bit chillier when we head for the alps tomorrow.