

Lake Como Excursions Summer 2019

COMO & LUGANO

This excursion give you the possibility to admire two of the most famous cities of the area, Como and Lugano

Como – Its proximity to Lake Como and the Alps has made Como a tourist destination and the city contains numerous works of art, churches, gardens, museums, theatres, parks and palaces. Piazza Cavour is a magnificent square that overlooks the lake, from here, you head towards the historical center and get to the monumental Piazza Duomo, overlooked by the thirteenth-century Torre del Comune, built in 1927.

Other remarkable buildings located in the square are Broletto, the historic home to the town hall, and the majestic Cathedral dedicated to Santa Maria Assunta. The interiors are worth a visit thanks to the paintings, the altars and the decorated tapestries.

Walking along the quaint streets of Como is an attraction itself, being the city really charming in every corner. While walking, you can stop and have a deeper look at Basilica di San Fedele, a former Romanesque Cathedral, the Civic Museums, the Art Gallery, Piazza Vittoria, and Porta Torre, a twelfth-century tower-shaped fortification. Just a few hundreds of meters away there is another beautiful city church, the Basilica di Sant'Abbondio, a masterpiece of the Romanesque style with its five-aisle decorated interiors, façade and two towers.

Lugano – In the early afternoon continue to Lugano one of the finest and more elegant towns in Switzerland. Lugano, often referred to as the 'Rio de Janeiro' of Switzerland combines the efficiency and elegance of Switzerland with the joie de vivre and friendliness of Italy.

The long lakefront was rightly described by Gabriel Faure as 'the most magnificent bay in all Europe' and its promenade is well tended with flowers, and adorned by works of sculpture and fountains. The shops and market stalls of Lugano are extremely varied and many are situated among the long arcades and porticos which abound in Lugano. The main Piazza di Riforma is a vibrant meeting place surrounded by 18thcenturypalazzi.

Highly recommended during your day is a visit to the famous Franciscan church of Santa Maria degli Angeli, which houses the famous, vast fresco of the Crucifixion, painted by Bernadino Luini, pupil of Leonardo da Vinci.

Lugano boasts many other attractions and activities, including its grand Civic Park, Parco Ciani, which houses a famous art collection, funicular rides up Monte San Salvatore, Monte Bre and a cog railway up the 1,700 metre high Monte Generoso. In all, Lugano is both cosmopolitan and charming and has something for everyone.

The transfer from Lugano to Porlezza is highly enjoyable, as we take a leisurely, hour-long cruise accompanied by a full commentary, on a private boat. Then back by bus to the hotels

DAY: FRIDAY (FULL DAY)

DEPARTS HOTEL BAZZONI: 09h05

RETURNS HOTEL BAZZONI (APPROX.) 17h30

COST: 55 EUROS PER PERSON

LAKE ORTA & STRESA

This is a full-day excursion of fairytale beauty and scenery.

Lake Orta, only twelve kilometres in length, has been described as the most romantic of all the lakes. It inspired Browning and captured the heart of Nietzsche.

We first visit the lake's enchanting resort of Orta San Giulio, set on a garden peninsular and overlooking the island of San Giulio. Orta's streets are too narrow for cars so it is a special pleasure to explore the cobbled streets, lined with shops, bars and restaurants and ancient buildings. All streets lead to the handsome Piazza Motta, nicknamed the 'salotto' or drawing-room, which is open to the lake and offers a stunning view over to the island of San Giulio.

Lake Maggiore is a majestic, blue lake, the second largest of the Italian lakes, at 65 km in length. The three islands close to Stresa, like jewels, all of a different character, are what set Lake Maggiore apart from the other lakes. Two of them still belong to the Borromean Family.

We visit **Stresa**, the 'Pearl of Verbano, and Maggiore's most beautiful town, at the foot of imposing Monte Mottarone, which has a cable-car running to its peak (4,920 ft). The town, which has a charming piazza and large number of shops and bars, hosts a famous series of concerts from the end of August to the end of September, featuring orchestras from around the world. The lakeside promenade is celebrated for its lush vegetation and flowers, including oleanders, mimosa and azaleas.

A highly recommended option, including in the price of the tour, is a visit to the Isola Bella by private boat (entrance to the Palazzo Borromeo and its world-famous gardens at additional cost). The gardens were inspired by the 'hanging gardens of Babylon' and Count Borromeo fashioned them into the shape of a ship for his wife, Isabella, giving the island its name. The palace houses a fine collection of art.

DAY: FRIDAY (FULL DAY)

DEPARTS HOTEL BAZZONI: 08h15

RETURNS HOTEL BAZZONI (APPROX.) 18h15

COST: 65 EUROS PER PERSON

BERGAMO

The city of Bergamo Alta has been described as the prettiest open-air museum in the world . Birthplace of the opera writer, Gaetano Donizetti, this sophisticated and stunning small town contains no building newer than the seventeenth century. The cobbled streets contain medieval towers and wonderful views at every turn, and the main piazza is one of the most beautiful in all Italy.

We start our excursion from the picture-postcard, historic village of Varenna, on the eastern shore of Lake Como, having crossed by ferry or boat. We then travel by coach along the scenic eastern shore of the lake to the town of Lecco and on past mountain scenery to Bergamo, approaching the historic city from the modern town of Bergamo Bassa, a notable city in its own right.

You will then have free time for lunch and to explore the town. Bergamo is well known for its meats, cheeses, wines and specialities, both savoury and sweet. You may wish to make your way to a scenic viewing point or visit one of the excellent museums. Or you may simply wish to browse the smart shops and picturesque streets.

In the afternoon we join our expert city guide for an interesting and entertaining tour around some of the streets and monuments of Bergamo, including the church of Santa Maria Maggiore, one of the greatest churches in northern Italy, and the chapel of the great condottiere, Bartolomeo Colleoni, which adjoins it.

This is a day of beauty and history in a unique city untouched by modernity.

NB. You meet the coach in Varenna (ferry ticket from Hotel Bazzoni not included)
You return by coach to Hotel to Hotel Bazzoni

DAY: THURSDAY (FULL DAY)

DEPARTS VARENNA 10h00

RETURNS HOTEL BAZZONI (APPROX.) 18h00

COST: 57 EUROS PER PERSON

COOKING LESSON

Have you ever wanted to learn to cook authentic Italian cuisine? At the Menaggio Youth Hostel you are in the right place. Our cooking classes offer the opportunity to experience traditional Italian cooking recipes using the techniques that have been passed down through generations.

[Cooking lesson programme:](#)

1. introduction to regional and national cooking traditions, coffee break, cappuccino available
2. preparation of pasta sauce
3. preparation of one choice between: pasta, gnocchi
4. preparation of tiramisù
5. coffee break /aperitivo on terrace
6. lunch with the chef
7. diploma and recipes delivery (digital)

You will learn to cook authentic Italian dishes in an informal and friendly environment with the wonderful view of lake Como just in front of you.

Minimum 2 persons: Euro 65,00 pp

Venue: Menaggio (easy to get to from hotel by bus, ferry or road train)

Day: Any Day Mon-Fri

ST. MORITZ AND BERNINA EXPRESS

This full day excursion to St Moritz and the world of the rich and famous takes you through breathtaking scenery.

We drive up the northern arm of the lake, and into the majestic Val Valtellina, one of the great valleys of the eastern Alps and producer of the area's splendid wines, of many centuries' renown, excellent meats and cheeses. Our first stop, for coffee, is at the small town of Tirano with its notable cathedral.

We then proceed to Poschiavo for a highlight of the day: a spectacular ride of an hour on the Bernina Express, past glaciers, over dramatic gorges and viaducts, as far as Diavolezza, covering the highest part of the journey on a train which climbs the steepest gradients in the world (of up to 70%) without the use of cog wheels.

It is then a short and scenic journey on to St Moritz itself, where you have free time to take in the stunning views over the crystal lake, explore and admire the shops and beautiful hotels, and to have lunch.

Our descent, by coach, is no less dramatic. We take the unforgettable road down through the Maloja pass, with extraordinary vistas offered at every moment.

Our final stop is back in Italy, at the charming, historic town of Chiavenna, the 'key' of Italy, where you can explore the town's attractive, cobbled streets and its shops.

DAY: WEDNESDAY (FULL DAY)

DEPARTS HOTEL BAZZONI: 07h35

RETURNS HOTEL BAZZONI (APPRX.) 18h00

COST: 63 EUROS PER PERSON

VILLA BALBIANELLO

The Villa Balbianello is one of the most famous villas in the world, and is the jewel of romantic Lake Como. It has been the backdrop for scenes in the James Bond film 'Casino Royale', as well as other movies such as 'Star Wars' and 'A Month on the Lake', starring Vanessa Redgrave and Edward Fox.

The Villa was built by Cardinal Durini in the 18th century as a literary retreat, on the site of a Franciscan monastery. The villa is unique on Lake Como as being the only villa offering visitors the chance to view it as it was lived in by its last, extraordinary owner, Count Guido Monzino. Monzino was a famous Italian explorer, the first Italian to climb to the summit of Mount Everest. He bought the villa in 1974, his favorite retreat, and he used it as the base to plan his expeditions. Part of the villa is a museum dedicated to his explorations, which include his expedition to the South Pole.

Count Monzino bequeathed the villa in 1988 to FAI, the Italian equivalent of the National Trust and so ensured that his writings and priceless collections of art and memorabilia can be admired 'in situ'.

A visit to this villa remains forever in the memory.

DAY: SUNDAY (HALF DAY)

DEPARTS : BY BOAT, 5 MINS WALK FROM HOTEL BAZZONI 15h15

RETURNS (APPRX.) 18h00

COST: 47 EUROS PER PERSON

Not suitable for people with walking difficulties