

“HIGHLIGHTS OF THE ITALIAN LAKES” - 4 DAYS

A wonderful tour which combines the truly stunning scenery and the old-world charm of Italy's premier lakes.



Day 1 MILAN / STRESA

Upon your arrival in Milan's airport the group will be met by our representative for the private transfer to Milan city. Meet the guide near Sforza Castle and start a half day tour to explore centuries of history and heritage blend seamlessly with cutting edge styles and fashions. Explore the medieval Sforza Castle, an imposing citadel built in the 15th century to accommodate Milan's lords, ladies and landed gentry. Continue onward to visit the famous Duomo di Milano (Milan Cathedral), one of the largest cathedrals in the world. Stand in awe of its striking, Gothic architecture and marvel at the staggering 135 or so spires and 3,200 statues that line its enormous, stone flanks. Listen as your guide shares the cathedral's rich history before going inside to explore on your own.

No tour of Milan would be complete without taking in some of the city's finest shopping hot spots — this is the world's fashion capital! Wander the chic boutiques and luxury stores of the glamorous Galleria Vittorio Emanuele shopping arcade, and admire the many luxurious items on sale.

After the tour, continue to Stresa. Dinner and overnightstay in hotel.

Day 2 STRESA / ISOLA BELLA / ISOLA PESCATORI / ISOLA MADRE / STRESA

Breakfast at the hotel, then departure to visit the amazing Islands on Lake Maggiore. Lake Maggiore is surrounded by the majestic Alps and home to some of Italy's most impressive gardens. We will visit the Borromean Islands – Isola Madre, Isola dei Pescatori and Isola Bella.

First, we pass the exotic Isola Madre, home to a 20 acre park that is considered one of the most impressive in Italy before heading back in time to the simple life of Isola dei Pescatori where you will have free time to explore or shop. After lunch, the next stop will be the luxurious Isola Bella with the elaborate gardens of the Borromean Palace surrounded by boutiques and cafés housed in grand historic buildings. Finally, you will rejoin the boat and cruise back to Stresa. Dinner and overnightstay in hotel.

Day 3 STRESA / VILLA TARANTO / ORTA SAN GIULIO / ISOLA SAN GIULIO / STRESA

Breakfast at the hotel. Visit to the beautiful Villa Taranto in Pallanza, where you will find an explosion of flowers, colours and scents. After lunch, depart to Lake Orta, time at leisure. Travel by boat and visit the charismatic Island of St Giulio. In the afternoon, depart for the hotel. Dinner and overnight stay in hotel.

Day 4 STRESA / LUGANO / STRESA

Breakfast at the hotel. Excursion through the Alps and across the Swiss border to Lake Lugano. It's easy to see why this city is one of Switzerland's most popular vacation destinations. Lugano boasts a beautiful, large lake surrounded by huge and often snow-capped mountains.

You can spend your afternoon in Lugano as you like with suggestions and directions from your guide. Culture aficionados should visit the church of Santa Maria degli Angioli with the beautiful 'Passion and Crucifixion.' Painted by Bernardino Luini, this masterpiece is generally considered Switzerland's most important Renaissance painting. Luini's paintings have been compared to those of Leonardo da Vinci. If you feel like shopping in Lugano's downtown shopping district, you'll find plenty of choices - from luxury goods to, of course, delicious Swiss chocolate. We'll give you lots of time to explore Lugano before you board the bus and return to Stresa in time for your dinner. Overnightstay in hotel.

Day 5 STRESA / COMO / VILLA CARLOTTA / BELLAGIO / LECCO / DESENZANO DEL GARDA

Breakfast in the hotel. Early in the morning transfer to Como, where we will take a boat to visit Villa Carlotta, a beautiful villa built at the end of XVII by the Milanese marquis Giorgio Clerici in a natural basin between lake and mountains, facing the dolomite Grignas and the peninsula of Bellagio. The architect created for the Clericis an important but sober building, with an Italian garden decorated with sculptures, stairs and fountains.

Continue by boat to Bellagio where you will have time at leisure after the lunch to explore this charming village. In the afternoon, travel by boat to Lecco where we will take the bus to continue towards Desenzano del Garda. Dinner and overnightstay in hotel.

Day 6 DESENZANO DEL GARDA / SIRMIONE / VERONA / VENEZIA

Breakfast in the hotel. Depart to visit Sirmione, often called the *pearl of the lake*. Its magic atmospheres were already described in Catullus' poems in first century before Christ. Catullus was born here, and probably lived in the beautiful villa on the extreme tip of Sirmione peninsula. Continue to Verona, the legendary city of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, where these unlucky lovers lived their sad love story. In the late afternoon continue to Venezia. Dinner and overnightstay in hotel.

Day 7 VENEZIA

Breakfast in the hotel. Time at your leisure to visit the city of water and masks. Optional panoramic excursion by boat, visit to a Murano glass factory or a gondola excursion. Dinner and overnightstay in hotel.

Day 8 VENEZIA / PADOVA / MILANO AIRPORT

Breakfast in the hotel. Depart to Padova, situated in the centre of the Veneta plain is a city of great artistic and cultural traditions. This is testified by its distinguished monuments: the Chapel of the Scrovegni, the Palazzo della Ragione, the Cathedral and the University. Visit of the city and continue onward to Milan's airport. End of our services.

For operational reasons, there may be changes in the schedule or in the order of visits, but without altering the structure of the itinerary and always keeping the same level of quality.