



HEDONISTIC HIKING

NORTHERN LOMBARDY – 9 days

Vineyards, Valleys and Mountain Villages

This new Level 4 itinerary for 2025 starts in the UNESCO listed medieval town of Bergamo, lying north east of Milan. We explore its charming old town before heading to the vineyards of Franciacorta, home of Italy's prestigious sparkling wines. We hike with fabulous views of the vines and have the chance to visit the cellars of a local producer. We explore Lake Iseo, one of the lesser-known lakes of Lombardy, and take a boat trip to the magical Monte Isola. We visit the town of Lovere on its north shore, one of the most beautiful villages in all of Italy. We finish in the high valleys of the Valtellina, close to the border with Switzerland, basing ourselves in the mountain town of Tirano. We taste fabulous Nebbiolo wines, visit churches and palaces and see UNESCO listed rock engravings. On our return to Bergamo, we make a stop at the celebrated Storico Ribelle cheesemakers. At the end of the tour guests have the option to continue their holiday on the awe-inspiring Bernina Express train from Tirano into Switzerland.

What is included?

- **8 nights' accommodation** in three wonderful hotels
- **Two experienced and knowledgeable guides** who will look after your every need and bring this stunning area to life
- **All meals** including excellent wines
- **Gourmet picnic lunches** each day and snacks en route
- **Support vehicle**, enabling you to walk as much or as little as you please
- **Transport** in air-conditioned minibus
- **All museum entries, tastings and cultural visits** as per the itinerary
- Comprehensive **pre-trip information**

Tour Highlights

Visit UNESCO World Heritage sites throughout the region
Taste the wonderful wines of Franciacorta and the Valtellina
Visit the beautiful island of Monte Isola on Lake Iseo

Accommodation

Hill Colle: A hotel with modern, spacious rooms in the heart of the Franciacorta wine region

Vulcano Village: In the tiny village of Castro on Lake Iseo, this hotel has an enchanting location

Curt di Clement: An eco-friendly hotel in the centre of Tirano, converted from an historic house

Itinerary

DAY 1

The tour starts in the beautiful city of Bergamo, the 2023 European Capital of Culture. We meet at the Best Western Hotel Cappello d'Oro, in the lower town, at 9.30am. We take the funicular to the Citta Alta where we enjoy a tour with a local guide to see many of the main sights including the Piazza Vecchia, Colleoni Chapel and the Civic Tower. After a light lunch of local specialities, we drive to the Franciacorta region where we stay in a modern hotel in a small village in the heart of the vineyards. Time to settle in before we enjoy a glass of the prestigious sparkling wine before dinner in a local restaurant.



DAY 2



We start the day walking through the hills of Franciacorta, with expansive views over the vineyards. We visit the cellars of a local producer and taste the different styles of this famous sparkling wine before our picnic lunch. In the afternoon we visit a 12th century monastery with a wonderful 16th century fresco cycle and then take a private boat cruise to the magical island of Monte Isola, which sits in the centre of Lake Iseo. There is an opportunity for a stroll on the island before returning to our hotel. Dinner tonight in a local restaurant. **(10km/6.2 miles)**

DAY 3

We drive up into the hills above Lake Iseo. Our hike takes us into the mountains, climbing steadily on well graded paths, firstly through woods and then on open mountain trails to reach the highest peak in the area, at an altitude of almost 2000 metres. Although only a short distance from the Franciacorta vineyards we experience quite different scenery and are rewarded with spectacular views. Lunch in a mountain refuge before completing our hike and returning to the hotel for our final dinner in this region. **(12.5km/7.7 miles)**



DAY 4



We leave our hotel and a short drive takes us to the town of Trescore Balneario, where we have a tour of a private chapel with a stunning 16th century fresco cycle. We continue by road to a small village above Lake Iseo from where we hike along quiet tarmac roads and small trails with stunning views down to the lake. We climb up to a remote church with a breathtaking panoramic view, where we have our picnic. After lunch we descend down through the woods to arrive at the hamlet of Castro, where we stay for two nights. Later in the day we visit Lovere – one of the most beautiful villages in Italy. Time to browse the shops and enjoy an aperitif before dinner in a cosy restaurant. **(12km/7.5 miles)**

DAY 5

A short drive takes us up into the mountains to the west of Lake Iseo, known as the Bergamasque or Orobic Alps. We start our walk at 1300m, from where we enjoy a stunning circular hike, climbing above the tree line to enjoy open views across alpine meadows overshadowed by some impressive mountain peaks. There is no road access today so we enjoy a picnic which is hiked in by both of your guides. Dinner in the hotel this evening. **(14km/8.6 miles)**



DAY 6



We leave our hotel after breakfast and drive north along the Val Camonica, a UNESCO World Heritage site which has over 250,000 preserved rock engravings. A short walk through one of the pretty villages leads us to a beautiful Romanesque church and one of the most important prehistoric sites in the valley. After lunch in a tiny alpine parish, we continue our journey to the Valtellina. Before reaching our destination, we visit the astonishing Besta Palace, formerly a noble residence and a lavish example of Renaissance architecture. We arrive in Tirano late afternoon and check into our beautiful hotel in the centre of the old town. Dinner in a local restaurant.

DAY 7

A short drive takes us to the attractive, historic village of Teglio at 860m. From here we follow quiet trails which pass through terraced vineyards and beautiful hamlets with stone houses suspended over the river valley. We enjoy our picnic in a small village en route. We are rewarded with increasingly beautiful views as we gradually descend, passing a remote church clinging to the rocks before we arrive in Tirano. Later in the afternoon we visit a small wine producer to learn about the production of Nebbiolo wine in this mountainous region. Dinner in a local restaurant. **(15km/9.3miles)**



DAY 8



Our final hike starts with a short train journey up the Poschiavo valley, part of the same route taken by the Bernina Express which travels from Tirano to St Moritz. We experience the amazing corkscrew turns of the train line before we disembark at an alpine lake. We climb up through woods and past remote settlements to reach the historic Path of the Smugglers – used for contraband up until the 1970s. We stop at a mountain restaurant for lunch before descending steeply through chestnut woods and tiny hamlets to arrive at the medieval gate of Tirano. Final dinner in a local restaurant. **(18km/11.2miles)**

DAY 9

We depart Tirano after breakfast and head back to Bergamo. En route we learn about the fascinating local cheese known as Storico Ribelle. These cheeses, awarded a Slow Food presidia, are made from cow and goat milks following ancient traditions of summer alpine grazing. We enjoy a private visit and a tasting. We arrive back in Bergamo train station at 2 pm and Bergamo airport at 2.30 pm.



On the final day guests who don't wish to return to Bergamo will have other options:

1. Say farewell to the group in Tirano and take the spell-binding **Bernina Express** directly from Tirano into Switzerland. This is truly one of Europe's most spectacular train journeys, as the track snakes its way past alpine gorges, glaciers and crosses over monumental viaducts. The journey to St Moritz takes approximately 2.5 hours or it is possible to continue on to Chur, or connect to other Swiss cities. It is easy to do the return to St Moritz as a day trip. It is also possible to exit the Bernina Express at one of its alpine stops along the route and book to stay for a spectacular night or two in this panoramic scenery. Our final hotel can help to book excursions.
2. Join the visit to Storico Ribelle and then take a train from Morbegno back to Tirano, and make the journey on the Bernina Express the following day. Morbegno is on the Milan-Tirano train line.

Walking

Shortest day: **10km/6.2 miles**

Longest day: **18km/11.2 miles**

There are 6 days of walking on the trip. We walk on cobbled mule tracks, mountain trails, through vineyards (which can be muddy after rain) and along quiet tarmac roads. There are some steep ascents and descents, 600m-800m on most days, and a 1200m descent on the final day. The mountain trails are rocky in places, and on Day 5 there is no van access at lunchtime. Since some of the walking is in the mountains it is important to be prepared for adverse weather conditions. Sturdy walking boots, with good grip and ankle support, are essential. Walking poles are highly recommended, especially on steeper sections.

Weather

Average temperatures in Northern Lombardy in October range from 7° to 17°, and heavy showers can be expected at times.

See [today's weather in Bergamo](#) See [today's weather in Tirano](#)

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HEDONISTIC HIKING

PO Box 200 Porepunkah 3740 VIC Australia

ABN: 66 121332796

Tel: AUS +61 (0)428 198918 UK +44 (0)1858 565148

Email: info@hedonistichiking.com Web: www.hedonistichiking.com