



# HEDONISTIC HIKING

## The Italian Lakes - 8 Days

### Lakes, Gardens and Majestic Mountains

This tour explores three of the lakes of northern Italy: Lake Como, Lake Maggiore and the lesser-known Lake Orta. All three lakes have a magnificent backdrop of the snow-capped peaks of the Italian Alps. We stay in three hotels, two of which are located right on the lake and have their own private jetty. The tour passes through Switzerland and we visit, and hike near, the Swiss city of Locarno on the north western shore of Lake Maggiore. In addition to our vehicles we use boats, cable cars and funiculars to transport us to different areas for walking. The tour starts in the centre of Milan, with an exclusive tour of some of the city's hidden artistic gems, and finishes at Milan Malpensa airport.

#### What is included?

- **7 nights' accommodation** in three wonderful hotels
- **Two experienced, knowledgeable guides** to look after your every need and bring this stunning area to life
- **All meals** including excellent wines, with the exception of dinner on Day 5 which is at your leisure
- **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** as per the itinerary
- Comprehensive **pre-trip information**

#### Highlights

Private guided tour of some of the hidden artistic gems of Milan

Private boat trips on Lakes Como, Maggiore and Orta

Visits to the gardens of Isola Bella and Villa Taranto

#### Accommodation

**Hotel Bellavista:** Family-run Liberty-style villa above Lake Como\*

**Grand Hotel Majestic:** Historic hotel with a pool in the quiet town of Pallanza on Lake Maggiore

**Hotel San Rocco:** 4-star lakeside hotel in Orta San Giulio with excellent restaurant

\*If we require a large number of rooms we may also use the nearby **Vista Lago** hotel which, as the name suggests, has wonderful views of the lake.

## Itinerary

### Day 1

**10am.** The tour meeting place will be the [UNA HOTEL CUSANI](#) which is 700 metres from Milano CADORNA train station (also known as Stazione Nord). Our first stop is a private guided tour of some of Milan's hidden artistic gems. After a light lunch in a local trattoria a short drive takes us to **Como**. We stay in **Brunate**, a small hamlet above the lake. We stay for three nights in a recently renovated [Liberty-style villa](#) in the centre of the hamlet and, if we have large groups, a [nearby hotel](#) with lake views. This evening we have a welcome drink and dinner in the hotel restaurant.



### Day 2



We depart the hotel on foot and follow quiet shady paths through the woods with glimpses to Lake Como below. Pass through a few hamlets which seem to cling to the hillside and are only accessible by foot. Discover fascinating geological formations before we descend on an old stepped path down to the village of Torno on the lake from where we catch a boat back to Como. In the evening we descend by funicular to dinner in a restaurant on the shores of Lake Como. **(12km/7.5 miles)**

### Day 3

A challenging yet rewarding hike leads from the hotel and climbs up to the ridge of the "Triangolo Lariano" which rises to 1300m between the two southern arms of the lake. Enjoy wonderful views to the lake, the Alps and south to the plain of Milan. Lunch in a mountain refuge. In the afternoon we continue along the ridge making the most of the spectacular landscape and return to the hotel by van. Dinner this evening in the hotel restaurant once again with views of the lake below. **(18km/11 miles)**





#### Day 4

We depart Lake Como after breakfast and drive via Lake Lugano to Locarno, an elegant Swiss city on the north west shore of Lake Maggiore. We travel by funicular and cable car high above the lake at 1250m. An easy hike on well-graded trails leads up through woods to emerge above the tree line at Cimetta. Descend to an alpine restaurant for lunch. In the afternoon a short

walk takes us back to the cable car and we descend to the lake. A pretty drive along the west side of Lake Maggiore leads to the village of Pallanza where we stay in the luxurious Grand Hotel Majestic on the shores of the lake. Dinner in the hotel restaurant. **(7km/4.4 miles)**

#### Day 5

A relaxing day today, we take a private boat to Isola Bella for a guided visit of the sumptuous seventeenth-century villa and gardens owned by the Borromeo family. Leisurely lunch at a lakeside restaurant. We return to the hotel by boat and the rest of the day is completely at leisure. Stroll the gardens of Villa Taranto, a short walk from the hotel, or just relax and absorb the serene atmosphere of the hotel. This evening you are free to stroll into town for an aperitif, enjoy a light dinner in a local trattoria or just unwind over a glass of wine in the gardens of the hotel overlooking the lake.



#### Day 6



We transfer to the start of our walk on the side of Monte Mottarone. Climb up on a well-graded trail to the summit of Monte Mottarone at 1491m from where we are rewarded with 360° views encompassing lakes Orta, Maggiore and beyond. Enjoy a picnic on the slopes of the summit before descending on small trails past remote hamlets and farms to the village of Armeno at 550m. Continue by minibus to Lake Orta where we stay on the lake in the

luxurious four-star Hotel San Rocco. Dinner in a delightful local restaurant this evening. **(16.8km/10.5 miles)**

## Day 7

A private boat collects us from the hotel jetty and takes us to the western shores of the lake from where we start our hike, climbing on a cobbled trail to a series of villages overlooking the water. We descend to the lake at Pella where we have a picnic before our private boat collects us to take us to the tiny island of San Giulio with its beautiful frescoed basilica. We return to our hotel by boat. Free afternoon with the opportunity to visit the pretty chapels of Sacro Monte, dedicated to the life of St Francis, and the lovely village of Orta. Fabulous final dinner in the hotel restaurant overlooking the lake. **(9km/5.5 miles)**



## Day 8

Return to Milan Malpensa Airport for 10.30am. There are regular train services from here to Milan city centre.

### Walking

Shortest Day: 7km/4.4miles

Longest Day: 18km/11miles

There are 5 days of walking on the trip and one free day. We walk on farm and woodland tracks, mountain trails, through vineyards (which are muddy after rain) and along quiet tarmac roads. There are some long hiking days on this tour and it is one of our more challenging itineraries. We climb/descend 300-400m on most days, with an 800m ascent on Day 6. The mountain trails are rocky in places with short sections of exposed terrain on Day 3. 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.

### Travel in Milan

The Malpensa Express train connects Milan Malpensa airport with the train station Cadorna/Stazione Nord. It leaves every 30 minutes from Terminal 1, and takes approximately 40 minutes. There is a free bus connecting Terminals 1 and 2 at the airport which takes ten minutes. [Click here](#) for more information. A taxi from the airport into the centre of Milan will cost a minimum of €70 depending on traffic.

If you are planning time in Milan before or after meeting the group we can highly recommend our private guide in the city, Alice Salvagnin, who can help you to secure tickets, and/or offer private guided tours, especially for popular artworks such as Leonardo da Vinci's painting of The Last Supper. She has her own [website](#).

## **Weather**

Although the weather in spring and autumn is generally mild with average temperatures in the mid 20s we hike at altitudes of up to 1500m so it is important to be prepared for sudden changes in temperature and in weather conditions.

## **Useful links to our website**

[Milan](#) City Page

[Look at Lombardy](#) Blog Post

[Cremona](#) Blog Post

See all our [Tour Dates](#) for this and other tours

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