

Experience firsthand the authentic true character of Italy's romantic Northern Lakes, one of the world's most exquisite landscapes. It has been beloved by poets, writers, and artists since the days of the Roman Empire. Our journey in this incredibly scenic setting brings us to verdant mountains sheltering gleaming deep blue lakes, captivating towns like Stresa spilling down the hillsides, and to Bellagio's opulent villas and gardens with rose-laden promenades. We explore the magical lakes—Como, Maggiore, and Garda—as we travel to hidden stone villages with tiny chapels, boat to Isola Bella, with its magnificent palatial villa.



HIGHLIGHTS

- Lake Maggiore
- Stresa
- Lake Como
- Villa Taranto Gardens
- Lake Garda
- Verona (optional)
- Milan

INCLUSIONS

- Round trip airfare
- Airline fuel surcharges and taxes and fees
- 7 Nights First Class Hotel accommodations 10 Meals (7B, 3D)
- Sightseeing per itinerary
- Admissions per itinerary
- Professional tour manager
- Baggage handling
- Hotel transfers

Day 1 & 2 - Depart from the U.S. on an overnight flight to Milan. You will be met by your local tour manager and make your way to your hotel in the lakeside city of **Stresa on Lake Maggiore**: Here you will spend the first days of your wonderful escorted tour through the Lake District of Northern Italy. (D)

Day 3 - Today you can enjoy all that Stresa has to offer or participate in an optional cruise on the Lake Maggiore. You will enjoy the beautiful landscapes of deep blue waters and high mountains with a full day cruise to the three islands: Isola Bella, Isola dei Pescatori and Isola Madre. Your first stop will be on the main island: Isola Madre which features exotics such as carob trees, a colony of parrots, and the largest Kashmir Cypress in Europe, 200 years old. Second destination is the Isola dei Pescatori, the only inhabited island of Lake Maggiore. You will have free time to discover the village and to have your lunch. In the afternoon the last visit will be dedicated to Isola Bella which is occupied by an ornate baroque palazzo, built for the Borromeo family in the 17th century. Its formal, terraced gardens are dotted with fountains, statues, and flora ranging from oranges and lemons to camellias and magnolias. Included admission. Back to Stresa where you can enjoy a walk in the historic centre. Tonight is yours to enjoy and explore. (B)

Day 4 - After breakfast you will depart for the world famous Lake Como. You will reach the town of Como, the main city, and enjoy a walking tour. Como's atmospheric medieval quarter has its centre in the Duomo, renowned for its elegant melding of gothic and renaissance styles. Following our tour, enjoy a cruise along the shore of the lake until Bellagio, getting the chance to admire luxurious hotels (Villa d'Este) or private villas (Clooney's one in Laglio) surrounded by wonderful gardens. Bellagio has been called the most beautiful town in Italy. There is a promenade planted with oleanders and lime trees, a spectacular mid-lake location facing west and a heart of stepped, cobbled alleyways, all of which make Bellagio the quintessential Italia Lakes destination. Tonight enjoy dinner at our hotel. (B,D)

Day 5 - After breakfast, the morning will be dedicated to the touring the Villa Taranto gardens which is one of the most important botanic gardens in the world, with thousands of species of trees and flowers from all over the world, planted harmoniously over an area of around 16 hectares, crossed by 7 km of paths and avenue. This afternoon is yours to enjoy and take in the history, culture, and beauty that Stresa has to offer. (B)

Day 6 - After breakfast we will travel to Lake Garda, the largest lake in the lakes district. It is perhaps the most famous and popular of Italy's northern lakes. Nestled between high mountains covered with olive groves, pine-woods, and vineyards, it provides a great place for relaxation. Next you will visit the most renowned lake resorts: Sirmione, the pearl of the lake, and the hometown of Roman poet Catullus, who probably lived in the beautiful Roman villa lying on the tip of its peninsula. The fantastic soprano, Maria Callas, lived here for some years of her life before meeting Onassis. We proceed along the eastern coast up to Garda, a little village on the shores. Enjoy a of free time exploring, then you will continue onto a winery in Bardolino to taste the delicious local wines. (B)

Day 7 - Today is at you leisure or you can take an Optional tour to Verona. The city of Juliet and Romeo lies a short distance from the lake. Verona has preserved a remarkable number of monuments from antiquity; it is one of the richest cities with Roman remains in the North of Italy. The Arena Amphitheater is the second largest after the Colosseum in Rome. In the guided visit you will also see Juliet's balcony. You will have free time to further explore and experience this wonderful city. This afternoon we will make our way back to our hotel on the lake. Here you can relax in its nice garden with a drink before dinner (B,D)

Day 8 - After the checkout from our hotel, enjoy a tour on the western side of the lake with stops at Gardone Riviera, where the "Vittoriale" lies, the final home of Gabriele D'Annunzio, the Italian daredevil "poet-soldier", philander, and proto-Fascist who created this lakeside fantasy inspiring Mussolini. Drive to the mountainous northern end of the lake where rocky cliffs rise up behind the waterfront of the town centre of Limone Sul Garda. It owes its name to the once renowned activity of lemon and citrus fruit growing. Free time to wander along the narrow lanes of the centre and to have a coffee and lunch in one of the cozy bars overlooking the lake. In the afternoon transfer to Milan, considered the capital city of Northern Italy. Most renowned for its business and industrial importance, Milan has also a rich historical centre showing the ancient Palazzi and artistic sites such as the Cathedral, Santa Maria delle Grazie, Palazzo Reale, and the Sforza Castle, the city symbol. Tonight is your to enjoy. (B)

Day 9 - Transfer to the airport after breakfast for your return flight home, taking with you many wonderful memories of Italy. (B)