



THE ITALIAN LAKE DISTRICT

APRIL 29TH - MAY 7TH 2023

Ringed by alpine peaks, the sparkling waters of the Italian Lake District command a landscape where mountains descend to meet the shores and grand hotels rise up in pretty lake side towns. Here at the convergence of Italy and Switzerland is an area graced with shocking beauty and extraordinary diversity, where each lake, with its own charms and treasures, unfolds against a backdrop of semi-tropical gardens, gracious old villas, and vibrant villages and traditions.

The legendary beauty of this region of Italy has enthralled visitors for centuries. Artists have been inspired by its brilliant light, poets and writers have been moved to pen great works, and travellers have come to bask in all that Italy has to offer. From the majesty of Lake Maggiore, the most famous of the Italian Lakes, to the enchanting vistas surrounding Lake Como, we'll explore the Italian Lake District, an area beloved of the Romantic poets as well as writers as diverse as *Virgil*, *Goethe*, *Stendhal*, and *Hemingway*, not to mention a host of royalty.

This fall join Discover Europe on a journey of discovery to one of the most beautiful regions of Europe. Whether on the jewel-like Borromean Islands, or admiring the panorama from the crystalline waters of Lake Como, this highly scenic tour perfectly captures the romantic charm of the Italian Lakes. And with a balance of guided visits as well as free time on your own to explore the villages and vistas, you'll experience the full flavor of Italy's lake side majesty.



THE COST OF THIS ITINERARY, PER PERSON, DOUBLE OCCUPANCY IS:

LAND ONLY (NO AIRFARE INCLUDED):	\$3880
SINGLE SUPPLEMENT:	\$ 990

Airfares are available from many U.S. cities. Please call for details.

THE FOLLOWING SERVICES ARE INCLUDED:

HOTELS:	7 nights' accommodation in first-class hotels including all hotel taxes and service charges
BAGGAGE:	Porterage of one large suitcase per person.
COACHING:	All ground transportation as detailed in the itinerary
MEALS:	Breakfast daily, 2 lunches, 3 dinners
GUIDES:	Discover Europe tour director throughout. Local guide as specified in the itinerary
ENTRANCES:	Entrance fees to all sites as detailed in the itinerary
FERRIES:	All ferry tickets as detailed in the day-by-day itinerary

Please note that travel insurance is not included on this tour. Insurance information will be mailed to each registration on receipt of deposit.



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SATURDAY, APRIL 29TH - Departure from your chosen US gateway city.
OVERNIGHT: PLANE

SUNDAY, APRIL 30TH - Your arrival at Milan's Malpensa Airport will be met for the short, scenic drive to our hotel on the shores of Lake Como. After checking in, there will be time to unpack and relax at the hotel with stunning waterfront views of the lake. This evening we'll gather for drinks and enjoy a welcome dinner. **(D) OVERNIGHT: COMO**

MONDAY, MAY 1ST - We'll have a walking tour of Como city center this morning, including a visit to the cathedral, and then have free time for lunch and individual exploration before we return to our hotel for a free evening. **(B) OVERNIGHT: COMO**

TUESDAY, MAY 2ND - This morning we'll drive up the lake shore to visit the Villa Balbianello with a private guide. Built on the site of a Franciscan monastery in 1787, Villa Balbianello is located on a peninsula overlooking the lake. The villa is famous for its elaborate terraced gardens which form part of the Grandi Giardini Italiani. We'll stop for a leisurely lunch (included) at a restaurant overlooking the lake, before visiting the Villa Carlotta. Originally built for the Milanese Marquis Giorgio Clerici in 1690, the villa features an Italian garden with steps, fountains and notable sculptures. We then transfer by boat across the lake to our hotel in Bellagio. The evening is free. **(B, L) OVERNIGHT: BELLAGIO**



WEDNESDAY, MAY 3RD - This morning a short stroll along the lake brings us to the gardens at Villa Melzi d'Eril on Lake Como with a local guide. Built between 1808 and 1815 for the Duke of Lodi, (Vice President of the Italian Republic under Napoleon, and Chancellor of the Empire, Francesco Melzi d'Eril) the neoclassical villa, chapel and orangery occupy a significant position overlooking the lake. It was decorated and furnished by famous artists and sculptors of the period including Appiani, Bossi, Canova and Comolli. The 'English style' gardens include rare exotic plants, camellia hedges, azalea groves and enormous rhododendron, alongside sculptures and artefacts, including two Egyptian statues and a Venetian gondola. We return to the center of Bellagio where the rest of the day is free to enjoy this charming lakeside town. Dinner is included this evening at a local restaurant. **(B, D) OVERNIGHT: BELLAGIO**

THURSDAY, MAY 4TH - We'll begin our day with a drive through the spectacular countryside to Varese, where we'll visit the Villa Cicogna Mozzoni and enjoy a private tour of both the house and garden with the owner. The residence is a stellar example of Lombard Renaissance architecture and was first built in 1400 as a hunting lodge for the Mozzoni family, Milanese nobility who retired to the Varese area. The gardens, dating back to the 16th century, include a 'stairway' of water featuring a temple at the top and a grotto with tunnels. We'll relax over lunch before continuing to our hotel in Stresa. After checking in, the rest of the day is free to explore the town and sample a local restaurant for dinner. **(B, L) OVERNIGHT: STRESA**



FRIDAY, MAY 5TH - We begin our first full day in Stresa with a boat transfer to Isola Bella for a morning walking tour with a local guide. Literally translated as 'beautiful island' this is one of the Borromean Islands of Lake Maggiore. Scenically divided by a fishing village and the Palace with surrounding Italianate garden, we'll enjoy the setting of historically sumptuous parties and theatrical events for the nobility of Europe. The palace, begun in 1632 by Carlo III, from the influential House of Borromeo, was to be dedicated to his wife Isabella D'Adda (from whom the island takes its name). We'll have time for lunch, perhaps on Isola Pescatori, before heading to Isola Madre. A walking tour with a local guide will acquaint us with the largest of the three islands in the archipelago. We'll wander among the well-known English style gardens – the Giardini Botanici dell'Isola Madre – dating from about 1823, and covering eight hectares on the site of a former citrus orchard. We'll return to our hotel for a free evening. **(B) OVERNIGHT: STRESA**

SATURDAY, MAY 6TH - This morning we will take a short ride to Lake Orta, to visit the Isola San Giulio and its Basilica, said to date from the 4th century. Returning to the mainland, we visit the Sacro Monte di Orta – the sacred mountain. Begun in 1590, this series of chapels leads up the hillside overlooking the lake, all of them filled with scenes depicting the life of St. Francis, in frescoes, paintings and life-sized terra-cotta statues. Erected over a period of 300 years the chapels also provide a fascinating look at the changes in architectural styles over the centuries. The rest of the afternoon is free to explore in Stresa – those who wish to can be dropped at the station to take the cable car up the Mottarone, the mountain behind the town, for fabulous views over Lake Maggiore. Our farewell dinner is included at a local restaurant this evening. **(B, D) OVERNIGHT: STRESA**

SUNDAY, MAY 7TH - Morning transfers to Milan's Malpensa Airport for your returning international flights back to the US - or alternatively, stay on and join our tour *Into the Swiss Alps*. **(B)**

*Key to included meals: B - breakfast, L - lunch, D - dinner