

CULTURAL WALKING ADVENTURE

# Italian Lakes

## Como, Maggiore & Orta



CLASSIC JOURNEYS  
THE WORLD'S FINEST WALKING TOURS



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*Classic Journeys  
provides unbeatable  
access to experiences  
around the globe.”*

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TRAVEL + LEISURE

## A Retreat to the Lake District

A Renaissance mirage, the villa floats on a mirror-smooth lake. It's morning. The mountains that slide into the water are still hidden in deep blue shadows, except the peaks high above that are tipped in apricot alpenglow. Italy's Lake District always makes us poetic, and this Classic Journey cultural walking tour visits the three most inspiring lakes: Como, Maggiore and Orta. Since the Roman emperors, these gracious waterside resorts have drawn visitors. The climate is mild, loaded with the vibrant colors of Alpine wildflowers and lush semi-tropical gardens. Our footpaths sometimes traverse mountaintop meadows and often hug the crystal clear waters. We spend generous parts of several days on leisurely cruises and visit fine villas, palaces and fishing villages. Nowhere else does stunning scenery, mellow air and rich history come together with such romantic results.

## The Classic Journeys Difference

- ACTIVE HIKING & WALKING
- LOCAL WELL-CONNECTED GUIDES
- PREMIERE HOTELS
- FOODIE FOCUSED
- HANDCRAFTED TRIP DESIGN
- MORE IS INCLUDED

## What's Included

- All breakfasts, 2 lunches and 4 dinners
- Full-time experienced guide(s) who are with you throughout the trip and handle behind-the-scenes logistics
- Admissions to tastings, historic sites and other scheduled events as noted in the detailed daily itinerary
- Gratuities for hotels, meals, and baggage
- All land transportation during the trip
- Award-winning boutique hotels that provide you unlimited access to the people and places, culture and history you came to experience

## Above & Beyond Benefits

### → PRIVILEGED ACCESS EVENTS

One-of-a-kind access to remarkable people, places and activities arranged just for you.

### → PERFECT PAIRINGS DINNERS

A special dinner prepared by one of our favorite chefs with a procession of wines tailored to each course.

### → WINE ON US

In many regions, we uncork wonderful local wines at every dinner, compliments of Classic Journeys.

### → INVISIBLE CHECK-IN

When your group arrives, we whisk you and your bags to your room immediately. No waiting – no tipping.

## Terrain

Moderate on good valley, mountain and lakeside trails, utilizing cable cars and boats as backup support. Vans are used on the days we transfer between lakeside locations. At your option, 2 to 4 hours of walking per day.

DAY 1 »

## Bellagio

You meet your guide in central Milan and transfer to Bellagio, sometimes called the prettiest town in Europe and always seeming to be flag-bedecked, with geraniums ablaze in every window and bougainvillea veiling the staircases, or *montées*, that thread through the town.

Your first stop is a visit to the Italian-style gardens of Villa Serbelloni, complete with fountains, statues and lush flower beds. These luxurious grounds boast an array of Mediterranean and subtropical plants and flowers that bask in the year-round sunshine. Following your visit, there's ample time to roam the narrow streets that lead down to the lake or stop at a café.

Later in the afternoon, you return to your lakeside hotel, named in Italian for "beautiful view". You're welcomed by our friend, Tiziana, whose family has owned the hotel since 1880.

You have time to relax and explore the lovely terraced gardens that have replaced the vineyards that once surrounded the villa before you enjoy a welcome dinner of local specialties, such as freshly-caught fish with risotto and ravioli.

MEALS: D

OVERNIGHT: BELLAGIO

DAY 2 »

## Bellagio

You follow your guide on a scenic loop walk today that leads you directly out of your hotel, into the countryside surrounding Bellagio, and ultimately back on foot. Throughout the day your walk links a great variety of activities that immerse you into the history and culture of the region.

You begin your morning explorations by meandering through the cobblestone streets of Bellagio. Here, your local guide shares historical anecdotes and stories about the town's significant place in the history of silk weaving in the Lake District. After visiting the Romanesque church of San Giacomo, a leisurely stroll leads from the picturesque lakeside town to nearby Villa Melzi, whose magnificent gardens boast more than 500 species of exotic plants and 14 acres of flowering azaleas and rhododendrons.

You continue on foot a short distance to lovely Villa Crella. Your reward is a wine tasting and the opportunity to talk with Lorenzo, the owner and your host, who has restored the family estate. After your wine tasting, enjoy a delicious homemade lunch.

As you return on foot to Bellagio, there's time for gelato while you enjoy the afternoon sunlight on the lake. After your gelato, your guide is happy to lead an hour-long hike through the beautiful countryside hamlets that surround Bellagio, where small villages and beautiful gardens are carved between the lush green hillsides.

MEALS: B, L

OVERNIGHT: BELLAGIO

DAY 3 »

## Como / Brunate

Awaking at your lakeside home, you decide to escape to the quiet of the hills surrounding the lake for a portion of the day. Fortified with a breakfast of local specialties, you take a short boat ride to Como where you stroll through the historic town and admire the incredible architecture—a mixture of Renaissance Italian and 19th century British—and then on to the funicular station. A scenic ride on the funicular takes you to the mountain village of Brunate, situated above century-old olive groves. As you amble along your footpath, you pass through a grouping of beautiful private villas dating to the end of the 19th century. From this panoramic lookout, you are treated to an astonishing view of the lakes below, and on a clear day, across to Switzerland and the neighboring mountains.

You return along the same path to Brunate and the funicular. Descending to Como, it's your choice to explore its fantastic architectural and artistic tradition, or perhaps search the local shops for shirts and scarves made of the famous Como silk. For lunch, you can sample delicious salami and cheese, prosciutto, olives and fresh bread, complimented by beautiful views of the lake. Back in Bellagio, it's your choice to relax at the hotel or explore in town.

This evening you join your local friends at a nearby hotel for dinner arranged on an enchanting private terrace with breathtaking views of the lake and mountains.

MEALS: B, D

OVERNIGHT: BELLAGIO

DAY 4 »

## Lake Lugano

Bidding good-bye to Tiziana and her staff, you leave your lovely waterside home and transfer west through the scenic Lake District toward your final destination for the day in Stresa. Nearby Mount Bre is perched above Lake Lugano in Ticino, the Italian speaking area of Switzerland. This morning begins with a walk of discovery—a privately guided stroll through the cobbled streets and pastel-colored neoclassical palazzi. The highlight is a visit to the most famous ornate church in Lugano, *Santa Maria degli Angioli*. Here, there is a chance to view great work created by Bernardino Luini.

After, you start a scenic lakeside walk that offers a profusion of color from March to October from the quaint village of Castagnola. As the season progresses, narcissuses and May-lilies give way to azaleas, rhododendrons and camellias, then finally roses, oleanders and hydrangeas.

You finish your walk in Gandria, a charming lakeside town and historic fishing village. Following lunch, you cross back over the border into Italy and continue to Lake Maggiore. Your home for the next three nights is in Stresa. In town this evening, you enjoy dinner in a fine local trattoria.

MEALS: B, D

OVERNIGHT: STRESA

DAY 5 »

## Lake Orta / San Giulio

Leaving lovely Lake Maggiore this morning, you ascend into the mountains where you stop for a visit with a local cheesemaker. Here you have the opportunity to try the local specialty, La Toma del Mottarone ("mountain", or "country cheese"), and to see the process of cheese making. With your appetite satiated and your senses peaked, you travel to the quaint village of Orta San Giulio, one of the most picturesque corners of Italy. With your guide and fellow guests, you follow the narrow, cobbled streets through Orta as they wind up and past colorful houses with ornate balconies.

Afterward, you travel to the islet of San Giulio by motor launch for a visit to its 1000-year-old basilica and exploration around the charming island. Back on the mainland, enjoy a relaxing lunch at a quaint *trattoria*. Later, soak up more spectacular views on a private speedboat ride.

Or if you prefer, take some time to explore Orta, filled with great shopping and delicious treats, including locally made organic gelato. Returning to the hotel, you will have some time to relax.

Later, enjoy dinner at one of the charming local restaurants, relax with a glass of local white wine in the hotel garden, or take a dip in the pool. Following dinner, you may want to enjoy a *passeggiata* (or "evening stroll") along the lake.

MEALS: B, L      OVERNIGHT: STRESA

DAY 6 »

## Borronean Islands

This morning you board a private boat for a ride out to Isola Bella ("beautiful island"). It's one of the Borronean Islands where one of Italy's wealthiest families built a series of palaces and gardens in the 17th century. After, join your guide at Palazzo Borromeo, set amid perfectly preserved baroque gardens.

Following lunch, take a short drive to Mount Mottarone, which separates Lake Orta from Lake Maggiore. From the village of Levo, you follow a scenic downhill path through small villages and woods full of birch, lime and hazelnut trees. Along the way, you see Someraro, a village that clings like a balcony overlooking the lake. Return to Stresa on foot for some shopping, exploring independently or just relaxing at the hotel garden and pool before dinner.

MEALS: B, D      OVERNIGHT: STRESA

DAY 7 »

## Lake Maggiore / Milan

Sleep in. Or use the time this morning to stroll through Stresa's historic center. Enjoy some time on your own to relax and discover last minute keepsakes before you continue on to Milan where you part company at Milano Centrale Train Station in the early afternoon.

MEALS: B

## Tour Hotels



### [Belvedere Bellagio Hotel](#)

A lovely lakeside hotel that has been owned and operated by the Martinelli Manoni family since 1880. Then, it was known as 'La Vignetta', because of the grape vines that surrounded it and the incredible views of the water and mountains.

NIGHTS: 3 nights



### [Grand Hotel Des Iles Borromees](#)

Built in 1863, Grand Hotel des Iles Borromées overlooking Lago Maggiore is rich in history and traditions, while still boasting modern comforts and the latest facilities.

NIGHTS: 3 nights

# Arrival & Departure

## → ARRIVAL DETAILS

START LOCATION: **Lobby of Sina Hotel De La Ville**  
START CITY: **Milan**  
START TIME: **11:00 AM**

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## → DEPARTURE DETAILS

END LOCATION: **Milan Central Train Station**  
END CITY: **Milan**  
END TIME: **2:00 PM**