

CLASSIC JOURNEYS

THE WORLD'S FINEST WALKING TOURS

Italian Lakes

Como, Maggiore & Orta



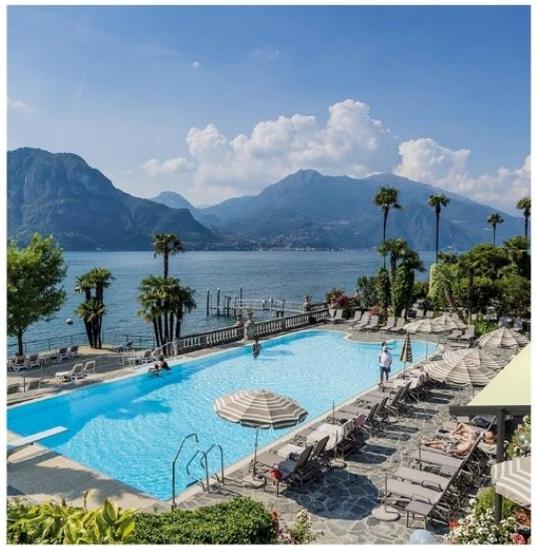
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*Classic Journeys
provides unbeatable
access to experiences
around the globe.”*

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 Journeys 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. Leisurely cruises lead to fine villas, palaces and fishing villages. Our footpaths traverse mountaintop meadows and often hug the crystal clear waters. They lead you on foot to local friends who are passionate 'makers' of olive oil, wine and cheese. Nowhere else does stunning scenery, mellow air and rich history come together with such memorable results.



DAY 1 »

Montevecchia Vineyards / Como

- [Walk hillside trails through Montevecchia vineyards to private wine tasting](#)
- [Explore Como's cobbled streets and delve into centuries-old silk traditions](#)

Gather in Milan, the vibrant heart of northern Italy, and trade the energy of the city for the tranquil patchwork of Montevecchia's rolling hills and finely tended vineyards. As you walk on terraced trails woven through the vineyards, your expert local guide—think of them as your well-connected friend—shares stories of the region's unique microclimate and the families who have cared for these vines for generations. One of those families is our friends Giordano and Mina. Your ramble leads you through the rows directly to their family winery for a private tasting of crisp regional whites and expressive reds.

Not far away is enchanting Como, perched on the lake and renowned for its rich cultural heritage, particularly in textiles. The city has a centuries-spanning tradition of silk production, dating to the Middle Ages. In the 15th and 16th centuries, Como became one of the leading centers of silk manufacturing in Europe, known for its high-quality fabrics and intricate designs. On your guided walk, you'll make your way from the historic center down the cobbled streets to the majestic Piazza Duomo, with some time to explore the elegant boutiques showcasing Como's famous silk.

Later in the afternoon, arrive at your lakeside hotel in Bellagio, which means "beautiful view" in Italian. You'll be welcomed by our friend, Giulia, whose family has owned the hotel since 1880. Relax poolside or explore the property's terraced gardens.

MEALS: L

OVERNIGHT: BELLAGIO

DAILY MILEAGE OPTIONS: SEE CURATED WALKS CHART

DAY 2 »

Bellagio

- [Stroll lakeside trails to Villa Melzi's cinematic gardens and rare plants](#)
- [Indulge in gelato, meet artisans, and savor la dolce vita in Bellagio](#)

This morning, join your guide on a scenic lakeside trail where you'll immediately understand why Roman royalty built their summer homes here. Carved by glaciers and reflecting the Alps to the north, it's renowned for its deep blue waters and the Art Nouveau, Romanesque, and Neoclassical architecture of the villas that line its banks. Exploring on foot at eye level with an expert local guide makes all the difference because you get their personal anecdotes about the backstories of who built and live in the nearby villas and their knowledge of the exquisitely landscaped gardens your footpath crosses.

Your lakeside footpath leads to Villa Melzi, whose magnificent gardens boast more than 500 species of exotic plants and 14 acres of flowering azaleas and rhododendrons. Birdwatchers can spot herons, swans, and other waterfowl gliding gracefully across the lake, while butterflies flit among the blooming flowers. Walking back along the spine of the peninsula returns you to Bellagio. It has a fascinating historical heritage, with roots that trace to Roman times. One of the most significant periods for the village was during the Middle Ages when it served as a strategic outpost for noble families vying for control of the region. Bellagio's strategic location at the intersection of the three branches of Lake Como made it a coveted territory, resulting in the construction of fortified structures such as the Castle of Bellagio and the Villa Serbelloni.

This afternoon, you have the time to explore Bellagio with your guide, indulge in an gelato, visit some of the exceptional artisans and craftsmen who have shops in town, or experience la dolce vita as you recline in a deck chair with an Aperol Spritz while you gaze at the views of the terraced hillsides, colorful villages and bustling piazzas that dot the landscape.

MEALS: B, D

OVERNIGHT: BELLAGIO

DAILY MILEAGE OPTIONS: SEE CURATED WALKS CHART

DAY 3 »

Villa del Balbianello / Mount Mottarone / Stresa

- [Cruise to Villa del Balbianello, then walk to local olive oil makers](#)
- [Descend mountain trails from Levo to your lakeside hotel in Stresa](#)

After breakfast, cruise across the lake to a privately guided visit of the iconic Villa del Balbianello. The elegant 18th-century mansion has served as a residence for noble families, and its grounds have attracted writers, scholars, and even movie directors for years. The setting on the tip of the Lavedo Peninsula is truly cinematic... it was even featured in several films, including James Bond's Casino Royale. You'll feel like a movie star yourself when you stroll through the manicured gardens and make your way up from the lake.

Mid-morning, set out for a countryside walk, passing through the village of Lenno, where you'll encounter fragrant citrus trees, colorful flower gardens, and towering cypress trees that cast their reflections on to the tranquil waters below. Your footpath leads to an acclaimed olive mill, where you'll meet the makers to learn how they cultivate their olive groves, see first-hand their production process, and hear about harvest season traditions that have been passed down for generations. They also invite you to savor an olive oil tasting of their handpicked favorites to cap off your visit.

So far, the Italian Alps have been an ever-present backdrop to your explorations on the lakes. Now it's time to experience the mountains firsthand. Making your way from east to west across the lakes leads you to Mount Mottarone, which separates Lake Orta from Lake Maggiore. On a walk from the pre-alpine village of Levo, you're treated to panoramic views of Lake Maggiore and the surrounding mountains. Wildflowers carpet the mountain meadows in vibrant hues. Your trail winds past ancient stone ruins, traditional alpine chalets, and rustic mountain villages. Every once in a while, you get a scenic peek of Stresa, your ultimate destination. Arriving in town, there's time for some shopping and exploring independently, relaxing in the hotel's pool, or going full sybaritic with a visit to the hotel's award-winning spa.

MEALS: B, D

OVERNIGHT: STESA

DAILY MILEAGE OPTIONS: SEE CURATED WALKS CHART

DAY 4 »

Lake Orta / San Giulio

- Trek mountain footpaths to a traditional cheesemaker's alpine farm
- Boat to ancient San Giulio's basilica and tranquil island retreat

Leaving Lake Maggiore this morning, you'll walk into the mountains on a scenic footpath, eventually crossing horse pastures before arriving on foot to our friend, Alfredo, a cheesemaker, and his family. He offers you the opportunity to try the local specialty, La Toma del Mottarone ("country cheese"), and get an up-close look at the process of cheesemaking. With your appetite satiated and your senses peaked, make your way to the quaint village of Orta San Giulio, one of the most picturesque corners of Italy.

While the islands of San Giulio and Borromeo look similar from the edges of the lakes, they have strikingly different settlement stories, as you'll find out firsthand in explorations by boat and on foot over the next couple of days. San Giulio Monastery is a tranquil sanctuary that has been a place of pilgrimage and prayer for centuries. And San Giulio Island is a picturesque home to a small community of nuns who maintain a simple and traditional way of life.

Tonight, following dinner, you may want to enjoy a passeggiata ("evening stroll") along the lake.

MEALS: B

OVERNIGHT: STRESA

DAILY MILEAGE OPTIONS: SEE CURATED WALKS CHART

DAY 5 »

Borromeo Islands

- Walk shaded mule tracks and glimpse village life on Lake Maggiore
- Explore Isola Bella's palace and gardens; dine on regional classics

Few things are as special as being on a boat on a lake as a place comes to life. Start your day that way with a boat ride to the village of Baveno where you'll begin a morning walk. Your shaded footpath follows the ancient mule tracks that connected the numerous small towns along Lake Maggiore. Along the way, your guide shares the agricultural and culinary importance of these locally grown chestnut trees, castagni, passing along favorite recipes as well.

This afternoon you'll boat out to Isola Bella ("beautiful island"). The Borromeo family, one of Italy's most influential noble families, transformed the barren island into a magnificent garden paradise and built a splendid palace as their summer residence. Today, the palace is adorned with priceless artworks, intricate tapestries, and ornate furnishings, as you'll see firsthand on your privately guided explorations.

Like many Italian villages, Stresa takes pride in its culinary heritage, and dishes have been passed down through generations. Tonight, you might want to try some of the locals' favorites, including risotto alla pescatora (seafood risotto), cotoletta alla milanese (breaded veal cutlet), and tortelli di zucca (pumpkin-filled pasta).

MEALS: B, D

OVERNIGHT: STRESA

DAILY MILEAGE OPTIONS: SEE CURATED WALKS CHART

DAY 6 »

Lake Maggiore / Milan

- Relax in Stresa's enchanting historic center with lakeside leisure
- Return seamlessly to Milan after a final lakeside stroll and espresso

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 to Milan and part company in the early afternoon.

MEALS: B

DAILY MILEAGE OPTIONS: SEE CURATED WALKS CHART

Tour Hotels



[Belvedere Bellagio Hotel](#)

The Belvedere Bellagio is a beautiful hotel on Lake Como that has been family-owned and operated since 1880. Enjoy the breathtaking lake views, stroll the landscaped gardens, and indulge in the spa, sauna, and heated swimming pool during your stay.

NIGHTS: 3 nights



[Grand Hotel Des Iles Borromees](#)

The Grand Hotel des Iles Borromées is a historic and luxurious hotel located on the scenic shores of Lake Maggiore. Decorated in Art Nouveau style, this upscale property has a new spa and wellness center, as well as indoor and outdoor pools.

NIGHTS: 3 nights

Curated Walks

CONNECT. ON FOOT. AT EYE LEVEL.

Join us to walk the most cinematic footpaths in a region. With thoughtfully curated walks that are about so much more than just counting miles. Yes, it's likely that your Fitbit or Apple watch will buzz when you hit your step count. But you probably won't notice because your soul will be buzzing from the connections you make with the people and place. Each day, we'll offer you one or two walks. Each walk is generally between an hour or two in duration. And our support vehicles are often nearby and add to your flexibility. Choose one or both to curate the right amount of walking for you each day. It's why Forbes magazine calls our tours their 'Luxury Walking Favorite'.

CURATE YOUR OWN MILEAGE OPTIONS EACH DAY

	MINIMUM	AVERAGE	MAXIMUM
Day 1	2.5	3.5	5.5
Day 2	2.5	4.5	8
Day 3	1.5	5	6.5
Day 4	1.5	2.5	3.5
Day 5	2	3.5	4.5
Day 6	*	*	*

*No scheduled walks

ROUTE NOTES

The terrain on this trip includes a mix of paved and cobblestone streets in Bellagio, Orta and Stresa, as well as well-maintained countryside and lakeside trails, vineyard and shepherds' paths of compressed dirt and stone. The footpaths offer a selection of level, rolling and hilly terrain with some elevation gain and loss.

THE ART OF THE UNPLANNED:

CRAFTING UNFORGETTABLE MOMENTS

We've carefully crafted each day's walking adventures with our expert local guides. Your daily itinerary serves as a well-thought-out plan, and we empower our tour leaders to adapt to unexpected opportunities or challenges. Whether it's an impromptu local invitation or a weather-related change, we're adept at making adjustments. So, while your experience may closely follow the itinerary, it might also include some variations. In essence, we invite you to "expect the unexpected" – knowing that our promise is to provide you the most genuine and authentic walking tours in the world.

Arrival & Departure

→ ARRIVAL DETAILS

LOCATION: Lobby of Sina Hotel De La Ville

CITY: Milan, Italy

TIME: 10:30 AM

The address of the hotel is Via Hoepli 6, Milan 20121.

→ DEPARTURE DETAILS

LOCATION: Milan Central Train Station

CITY: Milan, Italy

TIME: 1:00 PM

The Classic Journeys Difference

- ▶ **CURATED WALKS THAT LEAD TO 'ONLY WITH CLASSIC JOURNEYS' EXPERIENCES**
 - Immerse and connect you across cultures as you explore on foot
- ▶ **EXCEPTIONAL LOCAL GUIDES**
 - Bring authentic experiences to life
- ▶ **ENCHANTING ACCOMMODATIONS**
 - Where luxury and local mean you feel at home
- ▶ **EAT LIKE (& WITH) THE LOCALS**
 - Local flavors and time to savor the moments together
- ▶ **SMALL GROUPS, GUARANTEED**
 - Mean deeper, richer experiences while making friends along the way
- ▶ **REGENERATIVE TRAVEL**
 - We take strides to preserve cultures, traditions, and nature

What's Included

- Accommodations for 5 nights
- All breakfasts, 1 lunch and 3 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.
- ▶ **INVISIBLE CHECK-IN**
When your group arrives, we whisk you and your bags to your room immediately.

Enhancing Your Journey

We're constantly seeking ways to improve your experience. Count on us to update you with any significant changes before departure. Minor adjustments may be communicated by your guides during the trip to ensure you have the best possible journey.