



NORTHERN LAKES & DOLOMITES

Departure:
24 June - 4 July 2024
11 Days/10 Nights

This tour is designed for small groups to enjoy and experience some of the most spectacular scenery in Europe. Lago di Como, Lago di Garda and the Dolomites welcome visitors to an oasis of peace and tranquillity in an unspoilt environment. These areas are rich in ancient culture and tradition and dotted with beautiful villages; all with their own special charm and unmatched hospitality.

The tour starts in Milano: the economic heart of Italy, where the group will enjoy a two day visit of the centre of Milano which will include a special tour of Castello Sforzesco and the famous gothic styled Duomo. After Milano, we travel to Italy's most beautiful lake: Lago di Como. Our stay will be in the picturesque town of Bellagio. A special ferry ride will take the group on a scenic ride around the lake to enjoy the romantic settings of Menaggio, Tremezzo and Cernobbio. Then we set off to Lago di Garda before the scenic spectacle of *La Grande Strada delle Dolomiti*.

Mario, Viny & Gianni will give you the opportunity to experience these very special parts of Italy. There will be daily strolls with many stops at mountain retreats which provide wonderful eating delights together with unparalleled views. This tour is characterised by a la carte menus and delicious local wines.

The tour ends in Venice in Piazzale Roma.

Detailed Itinerary

Day 1 Milano (D) Your tour leaders will meet you at the hotel in the centre of Milano at 4.00pm. Introductions and a small talk on the tour will precede an evening walk of the city. Milano is Italy's economic centre and design capital of the world. We will visit Piazza Duomo and the impressive Cathedral. It will follow with a special dinner in a traditional restaurant.

Day 2 Milano (BD) Today, a local guide will take the group on a walking tour of the historical centre of Milano. Travellers will visit the imposing Castello Sforzesco and its museums, the shoppers' paradise – Galleria Vittorio Emanuele, Piazza dei Mercanti and La Scala Opera House. The itinerary will give the group the opportunity to visit one of the greatest masterpieces: the 'Rondanini Pieta' by Michelangelo'.

In the afternoon, there will be free time to visit nearby sights such as Palazzo Reale or perhaps window shop down some of the most famous fashion avenues of the world. Dinner is organised in a traditional restaurant in the Brera district.

Day 3 Milano/Lago di Como/Bellagio (BD) After breakfast we make our way to the wonderful Lago di Como. Our first destination is the city of Como where the group will have free time to explore the historical centre of the City. In the afternoon, the group will take a slow boat and meander from village to village before reaching the beautiful town of Bellagio. Our three days on the lake will be in a hotel with lake views in the centre of the town. After check in there will be time for a rest and then dinner in a truly magnificent setting on the edge of the lake.

Day 4 Bellagio/Lenno (BL) Our second day on the lake will be a special experience. Firstly, a small ferry ride will take us to Lenno for an interesting guided tour of the famous and mysterious Villa Balbianello with its amazing lake views. The rest of the afternoon is free. During this time you may wish to visit Villa Carlotta: a luxurious palace, completed in 1690, with stunning English gardens. There are also the beautiful towns of Tremezzo, Menaggio and Varenna, also worth exploring. Free evening in Bellagio.

Day 5 Bellagio (BD) A peaceful tranquil day on the lake with the morning spent visiting the famous gardens of Villa Melzi on the edge of the lake. The afternoon is free to relax and take in the scenery or further explore the small streets of Bellagio. Dinner in a restaurant in Bellagio.

Day 6 Bellagio/Riva del Garda (BD) After breakfast we make our way to Lago di Garda: the largest of all Italian lakes and famous for its tranquillity and breathtaking scenery. Upon reaching the lake, our morning drive will take us along the southern area before a stop at the picturesque town of Bardolino. After some free time for lunch we continue on to Riva del Garda, passing some of the lake's delightful towns surrounded by lush groves of olives, vines and citrus trees. Dinner in Riva del Garda.

Day 7 Riva del Garda (BL) After breakfast overlooking the beautiful town square of Riva a local guide will escort the group through the narrow streets of the historical centre of Riva to learn about the history and culture of this beautiful part of Italy. After the guided walking tour, there will be a lunch at a traditional *trattoria*. The afternoon and evening are free to soak in the sun and enjoy the tranquil scenery of the lake.

Day 8 Riva del Garda/Dolomite Road/San Vito di Cadore (BD) Today we slowly make our way to *La Grande Strada delle Dolomiti* which links Bolzano with Cortina D'Ampezzo. It is 100 kms of some of the most spectacular scenery in Europe: gorges, waterfalls, glaciers, high passes, bell laden mountain cows, thick forests and incredible mountains characterise the whole of the journey. Our stay in the Dolomites is close to Cortina in San Vito di Cadore. Dinner in a local restaurant.

Day 9 San Vito di Cadore/Cortina D'Ampezzo (BD) After breakfast we continue to experience the scenic spectacle of the Dolomites. Our first stop will be the nearby town of Cortina, known as the "Queen of the Dolomites" where travellers will have the opportunity to explore this beautiful mountain village. The group then catch Faloria cable car and have lunch at the Rifugio Tondi at 2327m. Dinner will be in a traditional restaurant in San Vito.

Day 10 San Vito di Cadore/San Candido/Lake Misurina (BD) Today we journey to the South Tyrol town of San Candido. It has an historical centre closed to traffic making it perfect for exploring the many shops and the collegiate church which dates back to the 8th Century.

Then it is a short ride to the beautiful Lake Misurina to admire more unforgettable views of the Dolomites. There will be an opportunity to have lunch in one of the many lake front restaurants or take the Auronso Chairlift up to 1573m to view one of the iconic mountain landscapes of the Dolomites: Tre Cime di Lavaredo. Dinner in San Vito di Cadore.

Day 11 San Vito di Cadore/Venice (B) Today after our final breakfast in the Dolomites we slowly make our way down to Venice. As we descend passing many beautiful mountain villages, there are opportunities to enjoy the spectacular views of the mountains and valleys carved out by the receding glaciers. The group will be dropped off in Piazzale Roma in Venice for the next part of your journey.

Items included in the Tour

- All land travel in air-conditioned mini-buses.
- Accommodation for 10 nights in a superior 3 & 4-Star hotels in Milano/Bellagio/Riva del Garda and in a mountain chalet in San Vito di Cadore.
- 10 breakfasts.
- 2 lunches.
- 8 dinners.
- A la Carte meals accompanied by local wines and mineral water.
- Admission and guided visits of Villa Balbianello and Villa Melzi.
- Admission to all galleries, museums and historical sites included in the itinerary.
- Personally guided tours to all the towns mentioned in the tour.
- Ferry ride across Lago di Como from Como to Bellagio.
- Mid-lake ferry ticket from Bellagio.
- Return chairlift ticket from Cortina to Faloria.
- The services of the tour leaders throughout the tour.

Items not included

- Airfares.
- Travel insurance (it is compulsory for every traveller to have taken out a travel insurance policy in order to partake on a Vita Italian Tours). If you require, we can assist in organising a policy for you.
- Admission fees to places other than those specifically itemised in the itinerary.
- Meals on tour except when specifically mentioned in the itinerary.
- Drinks outside normal mealtimes or additional wine and other drinks in restaurants such as Tea & Coffee.
- Personal transport costs, phone calls and other personal needs.
- Accommodation Tax.

Cost

The cost of the tour, land content only, is **AUD \$6,864** per person in twin share accommodation. **A deposit of AUD \$500** is required to reserve a place on the tour which is non-refundable unless the tour is cancelled. The full balance due 90 days prior to departure. **Single supplements** are available at additional cost of **AUD \$1,296**. **The tour** is costed on a minimum of 6 and maximum of 14 people travelling on tour.

We recommend that you carefully read the terms & conditions applying to a Vita Italian Tour. Please refer to the Booking Page of our website: www.vitaitaliantours.com.au/terms-conditions

Additional information

The weather: it is the height of summer and it can get quite warm and humid in Milano, and on the lakes. For this part of the trip we recommend light, comfortable clothing with your favourite pair of walking shoes. You will be staying in comfortable accommodation with air-conditioning. In the mountains, the weather can be warm during the day with cool nights. We recommend a light wind/rain jacket. We do not place age limitations on the tour and welcome anyone with a moderate level of physical fitness. It is mountainous country and you can expect it to be very hilly and in some parts the gradients can be quite steep. It is not a hiking tour; however, some walking is required. You should expect to stroll leisurely for up to two hours with many breaks for sightseeing, coffee and a taste of the local produce.

The program appears to be full; however, it is mixed with long restful lunches and leisure time for your enjoyment and comfort.

If you need to, you can always take time off from the organised program.

For further information

Visit the web site **vitaitaliantours.com.au**

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