

Lake Maggiore

8 days **from £969** May, July, September & October



This holiday includes a week on Lago Maggiore, Italy's second largest lake, which stretches north from Lombardy and up into Switzerland. It lies, sheltered, on the south side of the Alps, making for a mild climate and consequent lush vegetation, with Mediterranean and exotic flora, including azaleas, rhododendrons and camellias. Maggiore is, in our view, much more scenic than, for example, the much larger Lake Garda to the East.

• 7 nights hb in Stresa • 3 guided walks in the wonderful lakeland scenery • Train and boat trips to access walks

PROGRAMME

DAY ONE: Flight to Milan, transfer to your hotel on Lake Maggiore for seven nights half board accommodation. Transfer times from Malpensa, Linate and Bergamo are 30 minutes, 1 hour and 1 hour 30 minutes respectively.

DAYS TWO TO SEVEN: On Lago Maggiore with 3 included walking excursions. Your base is Stresa, half way up the lake, which was put on the 19th-century 'Grand Tour' map by Napoleon's widening of the access road to the Simplon Pass – illustrious visitors came to enjoy the lakeside villas and health-giving waters. The lakeside promenade near the hotel allows for a pleasant stroll to the pretty town centre - around the main Piazza there is a good range of shops, bars, and restaurants, and from the art nouveau 'imbarcadero' boats and steamers traverse the lake on a regular basis (various types of tourist ticket are available).

Walk 1: Suna, the 'Portofino of the Lake', and Cavandone. Across the bay lies Suna, the most evocative part of Verbania. You travel there by local bus and begin your walk through the clustered medieval village houses, linked by seemingly random arched passageways. You then

follow a mule track past orchards, fine old villas, a 14th-century tower and a chapel, from where there are lovely views out over the lake towards the Borromean islands and the Alps beyond. Passing through a chestnut grove, you reach the hamlet of Cavandone, the 'Village of Stone Carvings', returning to Suna by a different route. 5 miles, 265m of ascent/descent.

Walk 2: The Western Lake/Monte alle Croci. You take the train to Lesa (a 12-minute journey), and climb gradually towards Comnago – there are views to Angera castle, over on the other side of the lake. Passing the Maria Assunta Chapel you climb through the wood to reach the summit of Monte alle Croci, with a wonderful panorama of the lake. Return is by a different route, partly on a road and partly on a mule track. 6 miles, 420m of ascent/descent.

Walk 3: Colloro. You take the train to the village of Premosello Chiovenda where an old mule-track leads to the Alpine village of Colloro. Set half-way up the hill like a balcony over the Ossola Valley, Colloro is situated in the National Park of Val Grande, Italy's largest wilderness. It is a pretty village with the typical stone

houses where you'll see rural life today. The villagers still have sheep and goats, grazing them on the upper pastures of Capraga. 4.5 miles, 330m ascent to the village of Colloro, though there is the possibility to lengthen the walk, adding an extra 250m ascent to reach Capraga. This will be a full day excursion, although the actual walking time will be approximately three hours.

There will also be a fourth, optional walk. On your free days, there is lots to see. Don't miss the magnificent Borromean Palace on Isola Bella, and the Villa Taranto, with its wonderful garden, created by the Scottish captain Neil MacEacharn. Optional coach excursions are also available.

DAY EIGHT: Free time until you depart for the airport for your flight home.



YOUR HOTEL

HOTEL MILAN SPERANZA AU LAC

★★★★,
Stresa (seven nights)

This four-star hotel is in two adjacent buildings in the centre of Stresa, overlooking the lake and opposite the boat station. The Speranza has a pleasant street-front café while the Milan houses the hotel restaurant. All rooms have bath or shower, wc, hairdryer and satellite tv. Lake view rooms are available at a supplement. Milan Speranza guests have use of the swimming pool at the nearby Hotel Regina Palace. (www.milansperanza.it)